KICKS BOOKS ORIGINAL

SWEETS

and other stories

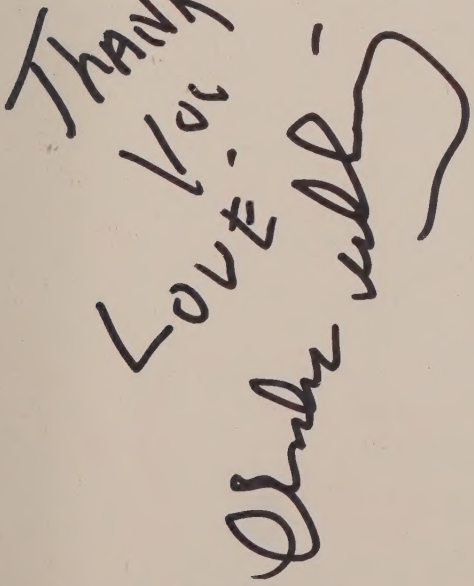
by ANDRE WILLIAMS

Foreword by NICK TOSCHES

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

PRESENTING...

ANDRE WILLIAMS



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& Other Stories

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Andre Williams

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To Sweets... wherever she may be.

INTRODUCTION

by

NICK TOSCHES

When I was young, Andre Williams was to me a vanished legend: the guy who wrote and recorded "Jail Bait" for Fortune Records in 1957 and then sort of fell off the face of the earth.

Jerry Lee Lewis has long said that being called a legend gives him the creeps, because he always figured a legend was something dead. Well, Andre Williams wasn't dead, but he may have been for all I knew. I remember wanting to put him in my book *Unsung Heroes of Rock 'n' Roll*, back in 1982. I managed to find and talk to a lot of other vanished legends, but I couldn't find him.

As recorded by Andre Williams (Mr. Rhythm) with the Charlie Morris Orchestra, "Jail Bait" was one of the last big-city rhythm-and-blues records released as a 78-rpm single. And Andre Williams seemed also to be one of the last of a kind. All I knew about him was that he had made his way to Detroit from Bessemer, Alabama, where, on November 1, 1936, he had been born as Zephire Andre Williams; and that, in Detroit, he had begun recording for Fortune in 1955. In the early eighties, when I was putting together *Unsung Heroes* and wondering what had become of him, he was in Chicago, hustling the streets for wine-and-dope money and living under a bridge.

Then, in 1995, he came forth again and record an album, *Greasy*, which was released the following year by Billy Miller and Miriam Linna, the principals of the Norton group. Relocated to New York, he began playing in my friend Jim's club on the Lower East Side. I really liked him, but I never got to know him. By then

I was of the same mind as my buddy Jerry Blavat, the Geater with the Heater. As he put it: "I don't want any new friends. I can't even protect myself from the ones I got."

We have a few things in common, Andre and I. We both enjoy a nip every now and then, our cheap false teeth have a tendency to depart our mouths at odd times, we can dress damned sharp when we want to, and we have both profited greatly from our dealings with Norton. Now we have something else in common. We're both writers.

I say this in earnest. What rock-'n'-roll songwriters have proven themselves at writing good prose fiction as well? Until now, I would have said only Ray Davies. Now, considering what Andre Williams has brought forth, the previous question is rightfully set forth in the plural. Because, believe me, this motherfucker can write.

Andre Williams has no literary antecedents. Robert Deane Pharr and his 1971 novel, *S.R.O.*, come to mind. Pharr (1916-1992), a now-obscure and unjustly forgotten character, was a black career waiter who was fifty-three years old when he published his first novel, *The Book of Numbers.* In *S.R.O.* he mined "the life," out there and down there (*la bas*, as Huysmans put it so enduringly in 1891), in his way as Williams often does in his way in some of the stories in this book. Aside from Pharr, whom everybody should read, I can think only of the prose-rappings of Dr. Horse, especially "Jack, That Cat Was Clean," released by Fire Records in 1958. Dr. Horse's real name was Al Pittman (1917-2004), another now-obscure and unjustly forgotten character to whom everybody should be hip.

I've been told that throughout Andre's writing process he often called Miriam Linna of Norton to say, "The juices is flowin'!"

And sure as the God in that Baptist church in which he sang as a boy was made of plaster, those juices surely did flow; and from them grew this book, which is to be taken more seriously than most other books that are published in these gone-dead days. Andre Williams is a real, natural-born, blown-in-the-glass writer, the kind they hardly ever make anymore.

When I first peered into this book and saw the words "Sweets got in the cab and asked the driver to take her to a good fortune teller," I was mesmerized, drawn in by what I knew to be a rare new voice in American fiction.

Andre Williams has proven himself to be a survivor. The stories he has here written deserve to survive as well. They most certainly deserve to be read, as the rewards they offer are many and fine.

Heed what I say. Otherwise you got nobody but your own self to blame.

EDITOR'S NOTE

by

MIRIAM LINNA

I first met Andre in 1995, when he recorded his comeback album, GREASY, with George Paulus at the wheel. Those sessions were Andre's foray back out of the shadow world, the start of a rollercoaster musical re-up that alternately revived and crushed him.

Over the next several years, Andre recorded for a number of labels and toured heavily through the US, Canada and Europe, with a variety of backing combos. He was interviewed for every print and online publication, and appeared as a guest on any radio station of merit. He was on billboards and magazine covers and was the toast of many towns. Yet here he was, eight years older at sixty-five, a so-called legend with little more than a mean old monkey on his back.

When the phone call came from rehab, I knew from his voice that Andre was desperate to get his mind back on the rails. Of course, I immediately suggested writing; I always did. God invented pencils, after all, and gave us fingers and an alphabet. But Andre didn't want to write any more songs, and retelling his life would be too depressing, he said, and besides, he didn't want to name names. So I suggested he write fiction. This became the challenge he needed to make it through the forty-two day program. For the next few weeks, and as purely spiritual and occupational therapy, we went back and forth on a near-daily collect-call basis. I'd give him a character or plotline idea, he'd write down what came to mind and would Fed Ex it back to me collect, and then we would do another installment, repeating the scribble-mail (or fax) edit process dozens of times. In a way, it was

like doing homework for a mail order university, on another level, it reminded me of my paperback writer hero Hal Ellson, who worked with kids who were booze hounds and addicts, and wrote fictionalized accounts of their daily confessions.

Andre's daily writings evolved into a novelette, plus one long dramatic short story and a batch of song-poems. The last packet that I got from Andre had a new batch of song poems attached, with a note that read,

Mrs. M,
This is a Grand Slam:
(1) The Noval (sic)
(2) The Movie
(3) The Music
Good things come in time.

Andre, I truly believe they do.

King-size thanks to Äna Economou, John Kisch of Separate Cinema, John "Butch" Phillips and James "The Hound" Marshall.

My sincere thanks to all the counselors
at Chicago Lakeshore Hospital,
who brought me through the trauma.

PULLING TIME

by

ANDRE WILLIAMS

I had hit rock bottom. There was no other choice but to go in and get myself straightened out. I went into rehab for six weeks. It took a while, but I really felt my mind starting to heal. Thoughts started coming to me from all over the place. It was unbelievable. My mind started refunctioning, all during the day and night. I had to do something about it, so I called my best friends in Brooklyn, Miriam and Billy, to tell them where I was.

I told Miriam how my brain was coming up with these thoughts and she told me to write it all down. I told her it was just thoughts, but she told me it would help me if I wrote them down. I asked her to help me make the thoughts work. I started scribbling, one piece at a time, hoping she could compile them into readable product. It kept my mind busy, and my counselor was glad I had something to do with my time.

That rehabilitation was a success, but once I got out, I fell again and unfortunately, struggled through another period of depression, and then another. I stopped writing down my thoughts. I've lived through many bad things, but I'm a fighter. I believe I have survived, thanks to Most High - and all the incredible experiences that I went through with Sweets!

I know this book will rub some of you the wrong way. But I believe that some of you will appreciate and even enjoy the fantastic trip that I have gone through to get to this point.

—Andre Williams,
Chicago
September 2009

Sweets

* * *

Having seven brothers, I was untouchable. Plus, I was pretty and I knew it. But I was not satisfied. I wanted more attention. All the boys in the hood wanted to get in my pants and I knew it. I would look in the mirror at myself and I would be scared. I was so pretty, I could have fucked myself, and I did not like that feeling. I would dress down, but it did no good. My tits was busting out. My ass just pushed my jeans out so bad I could not button my pants. I was a woman at thirteen and my mother knew it.

* * *

One night, while Ruth was sitting in her bedroom, Sweets heard a loud scream!! "Oh Lord, not my boys, please God not my babies!"

Sweets ran into her mother's room. "What's the matter, mother?"

Just as she asked, the newsman repeated, "Eight men was shot and killed by F.B.I. agents. Among them was Tommie Samill, in a bloody gun battle during a failed bank robbery. These was reported to be members of the Black Panther group."

Sweets broke down and cried. "They killed all but one of my brothers!" She was devastated. She had only one brother left. That was Nathaniel.

After they buried the boys, Sweets and Nat walked from the cemetery and Nat said, "Sweets, I'm going to join the Navy so I can take care of you and Mama." Sweets knew then she was going to be, for the first time in her life, all by herself. That night, Sweets went walking, trying to make sense of it all, and ran into Hank. "Sweets baby," he said, holding her tight, "I'm here for you." Sweets broke down and cried on his shoulder. Hank took Sweets to his apartment and they made love. Hank had caught Sweets at her most weakest moment. Sweets turned seventeen three weeks later, still in school. She started feeling funny. She would eat and when she did, it would come right back up.

Gail and Sweets had been friends since they were babies. They were a year apart in school because Gail had got real sick when she was nine and she had stayed home in bed that year. It made her skinny as a bean pole. She was smart about some things but most of the time you couldn't tell what she was thinking. Her eyes were almost on the side of her head like a catfish,

and she got teased a lot. Sweets trusted Gail with her life. She went to Gail and told her, "Something wrong with me, I can't keep my food down."

"Bitch! You're pregnant!" yelled Gail, her big eyes wide as saucers.

"Get the fuck out of here," whimpered Sweets. "I can't be. My mother will have a fit."

"Bitch, you fucked Hank four weeks ago, get real." Gail had her hands on her hips and was wagging her head side to side in disbelief.

"What am I gonna do?" cried Sweets.

Gail said, "Tell Hank, he's a real man and will stand by you no matter what."

The girls stopped talking and headed for Sweets' house. Gail put her arm around Sweets' waist and felt around a bit. "You're pregnant, all right! Somebody gonna have us a baby!"

First thing in the morning, Sweets called Hank and said, "I got to talk to you."

"What's wrong, Sweetie Baby?"

"I need to see you, Hank."

Hank heard something funny in her voice. Maybe she heard something more about the shootings. "O.K. I'll meet you on the corner in half an hour."

Sweets was sitting on the corner stoop of Miss Alvenia's Health Food Store. It was closed for the day. Sweets liked to sit there because the stoop was tucked in off the sidewalk and she felt safe there. She saw Hank coming and ran out to meet him. "Hank, I think I'm pregnant."

She looked in his eyes, but he didn't change his expression. "What do you want to do, baby?" he asked, squeezing her hand. "He's happy about it," thought Sweets.

"I don't know. If my mother finds out, I'll have to get out of her house and she will be alone."

"Sweets, whatever you want to do, I'll be there for you. Just tell me. But I want you to know I want my baby." Sweets knew then Hank was a real man. She was lucky. Most guys would have been mad.

Although she tried to hide it, time was not on her side, and she started to show. She bought bigger clothes, but that did not work. After seven months, she had no choice but to tell her Mama Ruth what was going on.

One day she woke up and walked into the kitchen where her mother was wiping a pan. "Mama, I'm pregnant."

Ruth started to sway, and held onto the edge of the sink. She gritted her teeth. "Sweets, you know my rules. Guns and babies is a no-no. I love you with all my heart but you can't stay in my house. Your baby's father, whoever he is, will have to find you a place to stay. I've had enough. I can't take no more."

Sweets had expected this. All the time since she started busting out as a woman, her mom had told her that boys were trouble.

Sweets picked up the phone, dialed a familiar number, and cried into the receiver, "Gail, I've got to find a place!"

"Call Hank, Sweets," said Gail.

"I don't want to beg that man," she whimpered.

"Beg that man, that's his baby, bitch. Get real, call him." Gail sounded mad.

Sweets made another call, "Hank, I've got to find a place to stay. My mama know I'm pregnant."

"Don't worry, Sweets, I'll have you a place tomorrow."

That night, Hank was killed in a drug deal gone bad. Gail called Sweets to break the news. "Sweets, sit down."

"What's wrong, Gail?"

"Hank is dead."

"Oh no! Oh no, oh no!"

"Don't panic," Gail told Sweets, "Don't panic."

Sweets fell to the floor and sobbed loudly for about an hour and a half.

Often, Sweets and her dear brother Nathaniel would take long walks and talk. This was one of those times. Nathaniel told Sweets he was going to join the Navy. "There I'll be safe from these streets."

"I'm gonna truly miss you, but if you think that's the best thing for you, then that's what you should do," said Sweets.

"What are you going to do?" Nathaniel asked his sister.

"I don't know yet, I gonna go over to Gail's house and stay there a couple days, by then I should have figured something out. I will write you as soon as I get an address."

A few days later, Nathaniel left for the Navy and Sweets went to Gail's. Several days later while walking home from school, Sweets ran into Snake, one of Hank's partners. "Hey Sweets, what's happening?"

"Nothing much. I miss Hank."

"Yeah, that was a drag the way he went out."

"Snake, I've got to make some money fast. I'm pregnant with Hank's baby and my mother put me out. I can't stay with Gail too much longer."

"I going to Texas tomorrow, if you want you can come with me. I got people there who put you in the know."

"That sounds good. How are we going?"

"I'm driving."

"O.K. I'm game, I'll be at Gail's."

"Alright, I see ya tomorrow."

The next day, Sweets and Snake were off to Texas. While they were driving headed for Texas, Sweets asked, "What do you think I can get into down there to make me some money?"

"I know a guy by the name of Big Al, he runs a big time cat house. Nothing but high rollers and big spenders. You can make a nice buck there."

"I'll do what I have to do. I have no choice."

About eighteen hours later, they arrived in Houston.

"It sure is hot down here," said Sweets.

"This is Houston. Now I've got to call Big Al. And get his address and we will zip over there and I will introduce you to him."

Snake stopped and called Al. He got his address and they headed to his house. When they got there, Sweets was shocked when she saw this was Big Al's house. "A red house! I ain't never seen a red house before, and it's so big."

"Eight bedrooms, each girl have their own room."

"I hope he's not full."

Snake knocked on the door. "What's up, brother Snake?" Big Al said when he opened the door.

"Same thing, try to clock cash."

"Come in. Who's the lovely lady you got with you?"

"This is Sweets, she's a friend of mine. She want to make some money while I'm down here taking care of my biz."

"You picked the right spot. Come in little sister, make yourself at home. Snake, you told her the rules?"

"Not really, I thought I'd leave that up to you."

"Well, we know how to treat our customers.. You just treat them like kings and they pay big bucks. It a sixty-forty split. You get sixty, I get forty. Nothing less than three hundred a trick."

"That don't sound bad."

"When the gals wake up, I will introduce you to them and they will show you the ropes. We had a long night last night. Right now, you can take your bags upstairs. Take the first bedroom to your right, the one with the pink walls."

"Have you had anything to eat?"

"I got leftover BBQ from yesterday, you're welcome to it."

"Thank you, I'm starved."

"Here's the number where I'll be in case you need to reach me. She's all yours, Al. Treat her right. I'm gonna eat some of your famous Q, then I'm gonna split. I'll call you tomorrow," and Snake told Sweets, "Make money, baby."

Sweets went upstairs to her new bedroom. "Damn this is nice. A big king size bed, walls covered with mirrors, a tape deck and 40-inch TV and a walk in closet."

While Sweets was unpacking, someone knocked on her door. "Come in," Sweets said.

"Hi, I'm Candy. And you are?" The busty chocolate blonde stuck her hand out to shake Sweets'. It was hard not to like her right away.

"Sweets, my name is Sweets."

"Damn you're pretty," Candy replied.

"Thank you," Sweets answered.

"Where you from, Sweets?"

"I'm from Chicago."

"Chicago, I always wanted to go to Chicago but I never had a chance. What made come all the way down here?" asked Candy.

"I needed some money and some air," Sweets answered.

"Well, this is a good place to get it, but there's nothing to spend it on. My man comes by every Thursday to make love to me real good. Then he's

gone. Super pimp, and he looks out for me real good. I make about five grand a month, my wife in law makes about the same. We do alright. Sometimes you might get one of them crazy rednecks, hard to handle, but I'll be on the case and cool things out before it gets out of hand. You just have to be careful. These Johns spend big money and they think they own you. Just don't give them a reason to go off on you and you'll be O.K. There's four of us working here now, you make five. We should have a good night tonight."

Just then, two more walked in. "What's up?"

"I want you to meet Sweets, she's from Chicago."

"Hi Sweets, I'm Sandy, this is Regina and this is Sheila. There's one more, but that bitch sleeps all day, you will meet her later." Sweets thought they were the prettiest women she had ever seen, hair and makeup like Hollywood stars, party clothes and mile high hair in broad daylight.

"I'm going downstairs and get me some of that BBQ Al was telling me about." Sweets was sure hungry.

"Come on, I'll show you where it is." Said Regina, taking Sweets by the hand. Sweets felt a wave of happiness. Regina smelled like soap and sweets, and she was so nice.

Sweets must have eaten ten ribs. "This shit is good! Al sure can cook."

"Yeah, he's a master," agreed Regina, licking her fingers.

"What time does the action start?" asked Sweets.

"Anytime, just be ready."

Just as Sweets and Regina joined Candy, Sandy and Sheila in the front room, the doorbell ranged and two white Johns came in. "Alright Al, I'm ready, call out the gals!"

"O.K. Sweets, let's go to work. Hi daddy," Candy

said in a sexy voice. "You ready for me?"

"Hell baby, let's get it on. Who's that other gal?"

"That's Sweets, she's new."

"That's some lady there, think I'll take both of you," Al said.

"You think you can handle both of them?" asked Big Al.

"Why, hell yes, you can get my buddy one of the others. Let's have a good time."

Candy and Sweets took the John upstairs. "Come on baby, show me what you got."

"Are you sure your heart can stand it?"

"We will see. Come on and give it to me."

Later, they came downstairs. "Damn Al, you sure got some hot stuff here." He went into his pocket and pulled out seven hundred dollars and gave it to Al. "Here you are, good buddy. As soon as my partner comes down, we will be out of here. But I will be back."

Things went well the first time. Sweets had money and Al was pleased. Candy told Sweets, "You did good, but it's not always that easy. Sometime you will get some real rednecks. Motherfuckers that will give you a hard time, so you have to stay on your Ps and Qs."

"Sweets," Al called out, "Phone for you."

It was Snake. "How's everything going?"

"So far, so good. I got some cash already and it's still early."

"That good, I will be through there later. Take care and be cool!"

"Alright, you do the same."

This went along pretty good for the first few days. Sweets was making money, close to what she needed to get her own place when she returned to Chicago. Snake had planned to leave Houston in about three

more days. That night, almost three days before they were to leave, three tall rich Texas men entered Big Al's, half-drunk and ready for fun. "Al, I heard you had some new stuff. Let me see what you got."

"Candy, go upstairs and tell Sweets to come down."

Upstairs, Candy said, "Sweets, Al want you to come down, there some Johns asking about you. You sure are getting popular fast. But be careful, these guys smell like trouble."

When Sweets came down, one man said, "Well, well, so this is the new pussy in town. Where you from, little pretty lady?"

"Chicago."

"Chicago, that's a long way from Texas."

"It just a hop, skip and a jump."

"Well why don't you just jump out them shorts and hop on over here to Big Daddy."

Big Al spoke out, "Why don't you guys take it upstairs?"

"That's a good idea. After you, little lady."

Before Sweets could close the door to the bedroom, he had her by the hips. "Come on, don't make me wait. How much do you want?"

Sweets answered, "How much will you give?"

"A thousand dollars if you do it right."

"Do it right? What do you mean?"

"Just let me take control of everything."

He went into his pocket and pulled out a bankroll big enough to choke a horse. "Here you go, little lady, and I'll pay all. Now just open your mouth and suck on this big cock till I tell you to stop."

Sweets said, "Wait, you're choking me, not so rough. I can't take it like that. Slow down, big man."

He grabbed Sweets by her head and pulled her to him. "Take off, bitch!" and slapped her across her face a number of times.

Sweets begged, "Please slow down, I can't take it."

"Bullshit, you'll take it and more."

Just then, he plunged his dick down Sweets' throat and she just lost it and bit down as hard as she could. Blood shot everywhere. "You dirty stankin' bitch, you done bit my dick off!"

He ran downstairs. "Al, that bitch just bit my dick off, I'm bleeding! Call the paramedics, call any mother-fuckin'-body, just get me to a hospital! And that bitch better not be here when I get back."

Al told her, "You better call Snake to come and get you, this huck ain't play!" He laughed, "He ain't gonna fuck with you or this place because of the law. But they might try and snatch you. Damn Sweets, you bit the huck's dick off, I ain't seen that before and I've been pimping for forty years. You better call Snake so he can come and get you."

All the gals in Big Al's place said, "Go on Sweets, get your shit together, you are a bad bitch!"

Snake pulled up and smiled. "Come, you done ran Houston crazy and bit a rich man's dick off. But you made some money, so that was the plan. But I can't leave yet, I'm waiting on a package from Mexico. So you've got two choices: Let me take you to the bus station or train or plane so you can head home, or you can wait a couple days and ride home with me. If you wait and ride home with me, you can make some more money. Because I'm gonna be dirty, we can ride back together, it won't look so obvious as me riding back alone in this red Caddie."

"What will I do for two days!" Sweets asked.

"Just rent a room and be cool. I'll pay for the room, plus I'll give you a grand."

"Damn! That's a lot of money. How much dope are we taking back?"

"You don't even want to know."

"O.K. Snake, I'll wait. I need the money."

Snake got Sweets a room in a very nice hotel while she waited for Snake to pick her up. A lot of things ran through Sweets' mind those two days. "I've got to keep getting money somehow, Sweets told herself. "I think I'll talk to Snake on the way back home."

Two days later, Snake called Sweets. "I'm on my way to get you, be packed and ready."

Sweets had no idea she was bringing forty keys back to Chicago. While they were returning to Chicago, Sweets ask Snake, "How much money can I make if I went into biz for myself?"

"As much as you want. But you've got to have a plan. And some startup money."

"Like how much?"

"Forty big ones. I can hook you up and you won't have to look back." Sweets thought to herself, "Forty thousand dollars, where in hell will I get forty thousand dollars?"

* * *

When Sweets got back home, she called Gail. "Hi bitch, what's going on?"

"Nothing. When did you get back?"

"Just now. I need to talk to you right away."

"Where are you?"

"I'm at Chili Mac's right on the corner."

"I'm on my way."

Chili Mac's was a joint with the best chili and tamales in town. People would drive from as far away as Gary Indiana to buy from him, white, black folk, you name it, they came to Chill Mack's. When she walked

in, Sweets was eating her favorite order: Two tamales and a bowl of chili. "What's up bitch? How are you doing? Have you went to see any doctors about your babies?"

"Not yet. But I'm going. Gail, I got some money, enough to get me a place to stay, but I got another idea that will make us two rich black bitches in town."

"Oh! Run it to me, I'm game."

"We're gonna start dealing."

"Sounds good but we ain't got no money."

"I know, that's gonna be my job. I got to get forty grand to start."

Sweets always did have an older admirer. He ran a car dealership a few blocks from Ruth Beasley, Sweets' mother's house. Dandy Dan, white guy in his early fifties. After Sweets moved into her small one bedroom apartment, she started putting her plan together. "First of all, I'm gonna need an enforcer, ass kicker, money collector. I know just the person: Big Helen. She loves me and will do anything I ask of her. I'm also gonna need four great looking girls, one for each spot. Also one runner and one mixer. That's 8 people that's got to be paid. And that's just for starters."

While taking a midday stroll, Sweets happened to pass by Dan's car lot. Lo and behold, there was Dan standing in front. "Hi little pretty."

"Hi Dan, what's up?"

"When are you gonna let me talk to you? You're old enough now."

"I don't know, what do you want to talk about?"

"Me and you. I'd do a lot for you if you just say the word."

"I'll think about it," Sweets answered.

Gail said, "You know what?"

"Yes. I do I right with you."

Sweets and Gail started singing "Dandy Dan and the forty grand."

"The man, he should have it or know where to get it."

"Sure, you're right. Well I think I know how to get it, thanks to Texas. Let's wait a couple days and I'll invite him up to my place and start working on him."

In fact, Sweets waited almost a week. Then she made her move. It was a hot summer day. Sweets put on her short shorts and took a walk. Just as she thought, there was Dan standing outside. "Hey pretty."

"Hi Dan."

"You look mighty good. When can we talk?"

"O.K. Dan, you come up to my place when you close."

"I'll be there about 7:30. Give me the address."

"I'll see you 7:30."

It was about 4:30 then, Sweets had plenty of time to get herself together. She picked out a sheer see-through gown and replaced the bright lights to a soft blue and rubbed down with some smell good and waited for 7:30.

At 7:30 on the nose, the doorbell rang. It was Dan carrying flowers and a fifth of brandy. "Come on in, Dan. You don't miss a beat when you say 7:30, you mean 7:30. I don't have any chairs, so you'll have to sit on the bed. Can I get you some ice and a glass?"

"Thank you. You look great. I have been watching you for a long time, but you were too young. Sweets, I want to be your man. I will take care of you as long as you treat me right. My wife is in a wheelchair. We don't have sex anymore."

When he said that, he looked at Sweets' sexy body and put his hand on her thigh. "There's nothing I would not do for you."

"First of all, Dan, I'm four months pregnant. My mother put me out. I have no job."

"That's no problem, I can handle that. I'll take care of your rent and your food and your doctor bills, anything else you might need. All I ask is you just do me right. That's all."

By that time, Dan had both hands on Sweets' thighs, softly rubbing them. Sweets lay back on the bed, letting Dan's hand move her gown up over her knees. Dan started to sweat. "You are beautiful. You are so beautiful."

As he moved Sweets' gown even higher, Sweets opened her legs and Dan said, "My God," and placed his head between Sweets' legs and just kissed her all over her thighs. Just then, the doorbell rang. "Oh! Shit, that's Gail."

Dan had already wet his pants. "Oh! I'm sorry, I did not mean to."

Crash! "Oh, that's alright, I just getting ready to go."

Sweets walked Dan downstairs. "I'm sorry Dan."

"Don't worry about it, there be plenty more times. Here, take this money. I'll talk to you later."

"O.K. Dan."

Sweets went back upstairs. "Bitch! You was almost too late."

"I know, I got my time mixed up."

"Well I think it's gonna happen. I think I'm gonna get the money.

"You should, look what he's getting."

"I've got to get a phone and I got to go to the doctor tomorrow."

That next morning, Sweets and Gail headed to the phone company and then the doctor's office. She was in there about three hours. When she came out, she had a funny look on her face. "What's wrong Sweets? Did you lose your baby? Oh! No!"

"Bitch please, stop crying, I got twins!"

"What?"

"You heard me, two babies."

"Damn, Hank's stuff must have been plenty powerful."

"Hank! What about the mother? I started not to give Hank some pussy, but he caught me at the right time. Now I've got to get money."

"Two babies. Damn, damn, damn."

"Gail, please stop saying damn. I'm in deep shit!"

"Two babies! Damn!"

"I should go and wake Hank out of his grave and beat his ass."

"Well, what you gonna do?"

"I'm gonna call Snake and see when can he hook me up. Then we are going to talk to Big Helen. Then I'm gonna get the money from Dan. Then me and you and Big Helen is going out of town and cop. Then we are going to get money. Then I won't have to worry about feeding my babies. Then…"

"I won't have to worry about feeding my babies. Let's go and talk to Big Helen and I will call Snake."

Big Helen hung out at a joint call Flunkies. That's where all the gay and lez go to gather. When they walk in, the door man ask, "Can I help you?"

"Yes I'm looking for Big Helen."

"Do she know you? Yes, very well. What's your name?"

"Sweets, tell her Sweets want to see her."

"Wait here," and minutes later, "O.K. come this way."

Sweets and Gail walked up to Big Helen's table. "Hi Sweets baby. What's up?"

"I need to talk to you."

"O.K. have a sit down."

"I mean alone."

"Who's the bitch, baby and why she got to talk to you?"

"Shut the fuck up and take a walk. I mean now, bitch!"

Big Helen slowly got up and walked away. "O.K. what's up?"

"Helen, I need you to come in with me. I'm going to start dealing. I got a plan and I need your help to pull it off."

"I'll do whatever I can for you, bad as I want to get in them panties. And I sure can get us some free dope."

"If you come in with me, you can get all the pussy you want. Plus all the coke you'll need."

"O.K. what do you want with me?"

"I need you to be my enforcer, ass-kicker and collector. Plus, I need you to find me four sharp, I mean sharp, ladies. Pretty enough to party with the judges. I want them to get jobs at 4 curry exchanges that will be

our pickup and drop off spots. There's people going in and out often and money being exchanged, there be no heat. And find some narc boys."

"That's clever. You must be planning on moving a lot of dope."

"As much as I can. With the right crew, we will be the biggest operation in town."

"Sounds like a winner to me baby, I'll get on the case tomorrow. Do you have a phone?"

"Yes, here's the number. But we only talk biz in person. Just call and we'll meet somewhere."

"Sounds good, I talk to you later."

Sweets and Gail left the club. "Well that's another part of the puzzle. Now I got to find Snake and see if he can set up the connect and find me a good mix man and a dependable runner."

"You're getting all these people together, Sweets, but what about the money to get it all started?"

"I'll handle that, don't you worry."

Sweets asked around for Snake. "Tell him Sweets needs to talk ASAP."

The next day, Snake called Sweets. "Hi baby, what's going on?"

"I need to talk to you."

"O.K. I'll meet you tonight at Tony's BBQ joint at 9:00."

Sweets and Snake met as planned. "O.K!" Sweets said, "The deal, you remember telling me I could make big money if I had a plan and I had the money. I need you to set me up your connect, man. I fly down there and score. Me and Gail and Big Helen."

"Damn, Big Helen, that killer bitch? You must real got something heavy in mind. I see if my man will deal with you. There can't be no bullshit, my ass will be on the line."

"I know Snake, there won't be."

"O.K. I get back to you."

"Snake I also need a good mix man and a trusted runner."

"The only motherfucker I trust is my brother, I take him. His name is Benny, I'll cut you in to him in a couple day as I get the O.K. on the other thing. I will also keep my eyes open for you a good mix man. I call you later."

Later, Sweets said, "Now I've got to get the money, it's costing me some ass, but I gotta do what I gotta do. I'm gonna call Dan tonight and set up date with him. That's when I tell him my plan. I know he's gonna wanna fuck, so that's life."

Sweets called Dan. "Hi Dan."

"Hi baby, how are you?"

"I'm fine. Dan, I need to talk to you ASAP."

"O.K. let's have dinner. After that, we'll talk."

"That sounds good."

"I'll pick you up at 8:00."

"That'll work."

As Sweets was getting dressed, she started talking to herself. "This is the beginning of something good, you've got to pull this off no matter what it takes. You can do this."

Sweets put on her best. She was dressed to the nines!

When Dan rang the door at 8:00, she said, "I be right down."

Sweets and Dan had dinner at a fine club and dinner. "Sweets, you look simply great. I'm glad you're my lady."

After dinner, Sweets and Dan drove to Sweets'

apartment. Dan got comfortable and Sweets changed into her gown. "Come here, sit on Daddy's lap and tell me the problem."

Sweets sat down on Dan's lap, legs partly open, and gave him a big kiss. "Dan, you know I'm gonna have twins soon, and I gonna need money."

"We already talk about that."

"No, I mean big money, my own money."

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying I want to start dealing. I've a plan and I've already set it in motion, but I need your help to get started."

"Go on," Dan spoke.

"First of all, I'm not an angel. I like money too."

"How much are we talking about?"

"Forty thousand dollars."

Dan said, "Damn baby are worth 40 big ones?"

Sweets stuck her finger in her pussy. "This is worth more than forty, darling," and put her finger in Dan's mouth.

"We'll go to the bank tomorrow, but first thing's first."

Sweets and Dan made love almost all night. Afterwards, Sweets told Dan the whole deal. Dan was impressed. Early that morning, Dan left Sweets' place. "I'll be back at noon, be ready."

"O.K." Sweets answered.

Sweets looked out the window to see Dan pull off, ran to the phone and called Gail. "I did it! Bitch, I did it!"

"You got it?"

"Yes, yes, yes the shit is on."

"Well, I be damn. I had a feeling you could pull it off. What's next?"

"The bank at noon, then wait on Snake's call, then off to Houston."

"Sounds like a winner to me."

Three days went by, no call from Snake. Sweets was getting antsy. "Where the fuck is this guy? I'm ready to go. Maybe I should get someone else."

"No Sweets, stick to your first plan. Give time, he's gonna call."

The phone rang. "Hello?"

"Hi baby."

"Oh, it's you Dan. Hi. You have not left yet?"

"No, I'm waiting to O.K. and I have no gotten yet. Don't panic, sometime these things take time. It's gonna be O.K."

"Call when you're on your way out."

"O.K."

2 minutes later, the phone rang again. "Hello?"

"Hi."

"What's the holdup? I'm ready to go."

"Hi Helen, I'm still waiting on Snake to call me."

"O.K. stay close, call me when it's on."

Late that night, the phone rang again. "Hi, Snake?"

"Yes."

"I've been walking the floor."

"You got the money?"

"Yes."

"Well here's the deal: You fly to Houston. Check into the hotel you stayed at before. When you get there, call this number and ask for Rick, then say who you are. He will tell you what else to do. You got it?"

"Got it. I'm calling the airport right now."

"O.K. call me when you get back. Be careful."

"Right!"

Sweets called the airport, made reservations for three to Houston. And they were set to leave the next morning. She called Helen. "We're on. We're

outta here at 11:45 am. I will pick you up at nine o'clock sharp."

"I'll be ready."

"O.K. Gail, put the money inside the tape recorder. They look in no boom box. Remember, we're the Beasley sisters. We sing and going to Houston for a concert."

"Damn, all this money, I feel like a rich bitch," Gail said.

"Just put the money up and stop dreaming. Are we all packed?"

"Yes, I'm ready."

"O.K. we will go to your place first and pick up your bags, then Helen."

Sweets could not sleep those last few hours. At 6:00, Sweets woke up Gail. "Come Gail, let's hit it, time to move."

They stopped at Gail's, picked up her bags, stopped at Helen's and picked her up, then headed to the airport. When they got to the airport, they had to check in with the agent. Sweets said, "Three Beasleys."

"That's rare."

"Well, we are the Beasley sisters, we sing and we're going to Houston for a concert."

"Oh, I see. Well, thanks for flying with us and good luck at your concert."

They boarded the plane and took off.

Sweets, Gail and Big Helen arrived in Houston about three hours later, jumped in a cab and headed for the hotel. "Damn, it sure is hot down here."

"This is Texas," Sweets replied.

"Where are the cowboys?" Gail asked.

"Bitch, please, this ain't the movies."

When they arrived at the hotel and got rooms,

Sweets put in a call for Rick. "Well, looks like we wait again. That's the way this game goes. Nobody's rushing, they have to make sure we're not the law and that we are for real, too many drug deals go bad because they did not dot the I's and cross the T's."

"Don't worry," Helen added, "they will call, it's gonna be O.K. Relax, have a drink. Go take a swim, they will page you when a call comes through for you."

"That's a good idea, Sweets, let's go for a swim."

"But we don't have no bathing suits."

"You can buy them down in the lobby."

Gail and Sweets got swimming suits and jumped in the pool. "This feels good as Hell. One day I'm gonna have my own fucking pool."

"Me too," said Gail.

Just then, over the speakers, "Miss Linda Beasley, please pick up the nearest courtesy phone."

She picked up the phone. "Helloo!"

"Hello, is this Sweets?"

"Yes it is. And you are?"

"Rick, I'm Rick, can you be ready in an hour? I pick you up."

"Yes, I have two more girls with me that are part of my crew."

"That's O.K. as long as you say they're O.K."

Sweets and Gail rushed back upstairs. "Come, Helen, get dressed, this it."

"I know, he call here first, I talk to him while you were at the pool."

"O.K. Gail, get the money and give it to Helen, she's gonna have to test the stuff and pay the man."

Gail got the money from the boom box and handed it to Helen. Helen started counting. "Bitch, what the Hell are you doing?" Sweets said.

"Something you'd better start doing always, count your money no matter who gives it to you."

After counting, Helen said, "It's all here, forty Gs."

Just then, they heard a knock on the door. "Yes!"

"Rick."

Sweets opened the door and there stood a tall gray haired well-dressed man. "Hello ladies."

"Are you ready to go, or do I have to wait?"

"No, we're ready."

As Gail, Sweets and Helen walked out the door, Gail whispered in Sweet's ear, "Damn, he's fine."

"Gail, Gail be nice."

As the four of them walked out the hotel and entered the parking lot, there parked with the motor still running, a custom built $300 Winnebego with driver. "Would you ladies like a cocktail or a hit?" Helen replied, "I never hit before testing."

"Smart girl."

Then Sweets answered, "I don't hit."

"Smart girl."

Then Gail answered, "I don't hit, Rick."

"Smart girl. Three smart ladies, I like that."

"But I will have a gin and tonic," said Sweets.

"So will I," added Gail.

It took about an hour to get to Rick's multi-acre ranch outside of Houston. It was truly a mansion. "Man oh man, will you look at this, what a place."

As they entered the tri-level yellow stucco mansion, Rick said, "Just make yourselves at home, ladies, I get the stuff and we can do biz."

Rick went upstairs and returned with a black briefcase. He opened it. "There you are, 20 keys, packed and ready to go. Can you read a scale, Sweets?"

"No, but Helen can."

"O.K. Helen, here's the scale and a knife. You can cut into any one of the bricks you want."

"How about all of them?"

"Be my guest," Rick answered.

Helen put the bricks one by one on the scale. It's all here, now for the big test. Helen stuck the knife in one

of the bricks and pulled out about half of a teaspoon of the white powder and tested it. "Pa! Ya Ya it's the real thing."

Sweets said, "That's good enough, Helen, no need to punch all of them. Give Rick the money."

Helen said, "Here it is, count it fair and you find it there."

One of Rick's men started counting while Rick was giving Sweets her traveling instructions. "Now you wanna wrap each brick in plastic so the alarm won't go off. Each of you should wear panty hoes. You put each one down in the leg of your panty hoes. 20 pack, that will be five for each small lady and the big girl can carry ten. Now, whatever you do, don't panic. Let them find it, don't give it up. You should pick another route home. Maybe Helen fly home alone from Memphis. And you and Gail go to New Orleans for a day or two. Take the bus to Memphis and the rest of the way. I take you back to your hotel, then you should get out of there as soon as you can. Matter of fact, I'll get you guys to the bus station and see you safely off. You can call on my phone in my bus."

On the way back to the hotel, Sweets made all the arrangements. They got to the hotel, grabbed their bags and headed to the bus station while packing their legs. As they boarded the bus, Rick called out, "Next time you come here, plan to stay longer, I'd like to get to know you better."

"You got it," Sweets answered.

As the bus pulled out, Sweets told Gail and Helen to take the bags out of their legs so the powder won't melt. "We will put the bags back just before we get to Memphis. I will call the airport and find out what time your plane leaves for Chicago and me and Gail go on to New Orleans."

Sweets made Helen's reservations when they arrived in Memphis. Helen got a cab for the airport. Sweets and Gail had an eight hour layover. "Let's find a good place to eat and I will call Dan so he can meet Helen. Then we will head for New Orleans and relax for a day. I don't want to wait any longer."

When they entered the airport, Gail said, "I got to use the washroom."

"Damn girl, you picked a good time to pee. You just gonna have to hold it until we get on the plane."

"I hope I can."

"You'd better. Now we have got to get to the gate without any problems." Sweets approached the security guard. "Excuse me, can you show us Gate 4?"

"Right this way, ladies."

Gail looked at Sweets. "Girl you are good."

As they boarded the plane, Gail asked, "What are we gonna do in New Orleans?"

"We're just gonna relax. I think I'm gonna see one of those voodoo fortune tellers."

When they arrived in New Orleans, it was just as hot as it was in Texas. "Damn, I'm still burning up, why is it so hot?"

"Because we are down south, why else do you think? Let's hurry to a hotel so we can get out of these hot ass clothes."

"Right, right," they agreed.

They arrived at this lovely plus hotel, undressed and headed to the pool. "This is the life, I could stay here forever."

"Gail, get real, you are a lot of money to stay here for a month, let alone forever."

Later Sweets said, "I'm going to find a fortune teller."

Sweets got dressed and called a cab. "Gail, I'll be

back soon, chill out, O.K. Gail?"

Sweets got in the cab and asked the driver to take her to a good fortune teller. The cabbie took Sweets to a spooky part of town. "This is where the best of them are, I will pick you up in an hour."

Sweets went into the house of an 80-year-old lady with chicken legs around her neck. "Hello my dear, come right in and have a seat, it will cost you $50."

Sweets gave the old lady the money. She took Sweets' right hand. "You are a lucky young lady, I see good things for you. You are pregnant now, aren't you?"

"Yes, I'm about four months gone."

"You are also going to do well in your life, I can't see just how but I do see you driving a fine car, living in a fine house and a lot of money passing through your hands. But I also see a dark side. You are going to bring some bad luck on yourself that may cost you plenty. Be careful in your desires. Don't take advantage of the power you will be given. That's all I can see for you now, God bless."

Sweets left the house feeling really good. "I knew my plan will work, it gonna be just fine. I'm gonna be one of those rich bitches in Chicago. All I have to do is keep my head and don't know shit from nobody."

When she got back to the hotel, Gail asked, "How did it go?" "Wonderful, just great, we are going to be alright."

"Do those tellers really know what they're doing?"

"I think so. Let's go and get some of that famous gumbo that I heard was the bomb."

Sweets and Gail went to Bourbon Street, had gumbo and enjoyed some of that good New Orleans jazz music. They really had fun that night. The next morning they got up early. "O.K. let's stash the powder and get the Hell out of here, the plane leaves in 2 hours."

They rushed to the airport, one more checkpoint and they were over the hump. They passed it with a breeze. 2 and a half hours later, they landed in Chicago. "Right on, we are home sweet home."

Dan was not there. "Damn, what's going on, where's Dan?"

Just then, Helen popped up, "Hi bitches, what's going on?"

"Where's Dan?"

"He thought that it might not be a good idea for him to pick you up because he had just been out here yesterday, so he sent me."

"That was good thinking on Dan's part. How's everything?"

"Fine, Dan came up with a great idea. He will tell all about it when we get home."

"O.K. let's get there, Gail, get a cab."

"No, no, no more cabs. Helen said, "Look what Dan sent you, this is yours."

"What!" Sweets was shocked. A brand new convertible, Thunderbird, red. "Oh my God, my man."

"Yes, you sure hit the lottery when you caught Dan."

When the girls got home, Sweets called Dan and Dan came over. "Hi baby!"

"Hi, well we made it."

"Good, now here's what I've done. You know that stuff smells to high heaven, it's that ether, so I figured we had to get a place to work. Guess what! I got Noble, Clarence Noble of Noble Funeral Home, where we can work in the back room. It smells like Hell back there with all the formaldehyde."

"Very good, baby, you are a thinker."

"Also," Helen added, "I talked to Snake, he has gotten your people ready and I'm almost through with getting your girls."

"That's just great, I want to meet everyone

personally as soon as possible. I need to get this thing going ASAP. Dan, let's go and see this lab. Mean time, Helen, you better get back on your case, I want those girls right away."

"O.K. Sweets, I on it."

"Gail, you find Snake and tell him I'd like to talk to him this evening, if possible."

"O.K."

Sweets and Dan headed to Noble Funeral Home to talk to Mr. Noble about the lab. "Dan, that was a great idea for us to use the funeral home for a lab. That a great place for pickup."

They arrived at Clarence Noble's funeral home. "Mr. Noble, this is Sweets, our boss. She will be running the show."

"Mr. Noble, I'm very glad to meet you. I hope we'll have a long and good relationship together."

"I'm sure we will, but you're kind of young for this operation. Can you handle it?"

"Well, Mr. Noble, we will see. I see that you get paid every week, come rain or shine. Matter of fact, I intend to grow much larger than now. So how does $500 a week sound to you for starters?"

CHAPTER FOUR

Sweets and Noble closed their deal. It was perfect: Test tubes already there, work tables already in place, back door to the alley, no windows, ventilation. It was the spot for a lab. Sweets spoke, "Dan we have Helen, Gail, the mix man, runners, girls, that's eight people on the pay roll not counting Mr. Noble. That and there's us. Me and you need to turn $10,000 a day. That's $60,000 a week for starters. It's gonna take two months to get full speed. That means everyone will know their jobs, our powder will be in the street and the money will come rolling in. There's still a few more ends that need to be tied down. Dan, I think I gonna need ten more thousand dollars."

"Well, I'm in this deep, I might as well go all the way, because you're sure gonna have to make some advances. O.K. I have it for you tomorrow. I've got to get back to the lot. I'll call you later?"

"Yes and thanks darling for everything. You have been a dream come true. Well I told you Sweets, if you are down for me, I'm down for you..."

Sweets parked her car and started upstairs. Lo and behold, there stood her brother Nathaniel in his navy suit looking good. "Oh my God, Nat is that you? Is that really you?"

She hugged and kissed him and started to cry. "I've missed you so much."

"I missed you too. How are you? Mother told me about you, when are you going to have your baby?"

"Baby, I'm going to have twins."

"Have you talk to Mom?"

"No, not since I left."

"She miss you, Sweets."

"I know. I miss her, but I've got to make it on my own."

"What can I do to help you?"

"Nothing, you just keep on doing good. I'm O.K. How long are you going to be home?"

"2 weeks, then ship out. I'm going to make a career out of these 20 years, then I'll be alright forever. Then I can take care of you and mom."

"Don't worry about me, I'm O.K. Just stay in touch with mom. Come on in, Gail is going to blow her wig when she see you."

"Yes, I need to see her or somebody."

"You not getting none?"

"No, I'm on a ship, no girls. You sure you're alright?"

"Yes, I'm good. I got me a sugar daddy, he's good to me."

"That good."

"Nat, let me call Gail. Hello Gail, guess who's here. My little brother."

"What? You're lying!"

"No I'm not, he's here and looking good."

"I be right over."

Gail rushed over. "Well I've got some running around to do, you can stay here," said Sweets and left.

Gail and Nat got it on. Nat was home for ten days, so they really enjoyed one another. Nat left and Sweets got back to biz. By that time, Snake had got the two men Sweets needed. "Sweets, this is Benny, my brother, he will be your runner."

"Hi Benny, you're gonna be my right hang. You will handle all drop off. I'm going to start you off at $250 a week, here's $500, I want you to buy a good running car."

"O.K. Sweets, you can depend on me."

"And Sweets, this is Mr. Nelson. He's one of the best mix men in town. He's 45 years old, did time, he knows his biz."

"O.K. Mr. Nelson, I don't know what you're gonna need, there's already a lot of stuff at the lab but you might need some more stuff. So here's $500 for you. We are going to get started next week, as soon as we can get the girls in place. I'm going to meet with them tonight."

That night, Helen brought the four girls to Sweets' House. "Sweets, this is Christy, Vicki, Tammie and Glory. They are the cream of the crop."

"Hello ladies, I'm sure Helen has told you what your jobs will be. I want you to go ahead and apply at these four curry exchanges. You'll want to start as soon as possible. You must also be prepared to date police, judges and any other men we may need to keep our game going smooth. I'm giving all of you $250 advance so you can buy some sharp clothes. Keep 'em sexy. You've got one week to get yourselves together. Do you all understand where I'm coming from?"

They all answered, "Yes, we'll be ready."

"O.K. now I got to take Mr. Nelson to the lab so he can meet Mr. Noble."

Sweets and him went to the lab. Mr. Nelson was very impressed. "You've got just about everything I need. However, I'm going to need some ether."

"I can get that for you,"

Noble answered, "Good, I'll to have baggies, foil and a few more things I can pick up, when do you want me to start? I mean, what day next week?"

"I'm not sure yet, I'm waiting for the O.K. from my girls. I will call you. Mean time, just relax. When we get situated, there won't be much time to relax."

"O.K. Sweets, just say when."

Sweets was all set, just the girls was holding up the game. A few days later, Sweets got the call she

had been waiting for. Helen called. "Sweets, we are ready to rock n roll baby, they are in place. They start Monday morning."

"Right on, Helen. You did good. Oh yes, go by Dan's, he has a car for you so you can get around with no problem."

"What kind of car is it, bitch?"

"Nothing but the best for my crew, just get your ass over there."

"I'm on my way."

When Helen got to Dan's lot, he had a nice black 2 door Eldorado with red interior. "This is a motherfucker, Dan."

"Nothing but the best for the crew."

Dan gave Helen the keys. "It's all yours."

Helen got in and drove off. "Yes, yes, Hell yes."

She drove to Sweet's house and blew her horn. "Sweets, look out the window."

"You good, baby!"

"Thank you Sweets."

"Bitch, just don't fuck it up, nobody drive it but you. We start Monday. Go by and pick Gail up and bring her over here. I need to talk to her."

When Gail arrived at Sweets' house, she was very upset. "What wrong, Gail?"

"Everybody get a car but me. Everybody get an advance but me."

"Gail, why do you think I sent for you? Stop whining like a little pussy bitch before I change my mind."

"Change your mind about what?"

"I've made arrangements for you to move into your own apartment so you get out from under your mother's rule. Here's your keys. It's right next door on the first floor, 2715, apartment 3E."

"Is this a joke?"

"Go and see."

Gail went to her new own self apartment and opened the door.

"Oh my God! The apartment had everything in it, phone, TV, entertainment center, portable bar well stocked."

She went to the phone to call Sweets to thank her. On the phone was a note:

Look out your window. You will see a Thunderbird convertible. It's yours, the key is under the seat. Love, Sweets.

Gail dropped the phone, ran over to Sweets' apartment, threw her arms around her and kissed her right on the mouth. "Thank you, thank you, thank you Sweets."

"You better be glad you did not stick my tongue in your mouth. I would have taken this vacuum cleaner and bust you upside your head. O.K. starting Monday you will meet Helen and get the money, take it to Dan every day or as many times as needed. You also stay in touch with me at all times, do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand."

"O.K. let's go have dinner, I starved."

"In my car?"

Sweets smiled, "Yes in your car." Gail drove to Dan's. "Hi baby, do you want to go to dinner?"

"No, no baby, I got some paperwork to get out. New inventory coming tomorrow. I call you later."

"O.K. Let's get it on."

Sweets and Gail headed for the diner where she was to meet Benny.

"Benny, how are we looking for Monday?"

"If I can get the samples Sunday night, I can have orders early Monday morning."

"If it's as good as Helen say it is, you gonna be calling Houston real soon."

"O.K. I put Mr. Nelson to work Sunday morning so you can have your samples by Sunday evening."

"That works for me. I don't want you to call Mr. Nelson or Mr. Noble, your call may be traced, always call me. I'll call Mr. Nelson or Noble."

Sunday morning, he went to work and packed up samples. Benny picked up the samples and started passing it around. By early Monday morning, Benny had more orders than Nelson could really handle. "Damn Sweets, these junkies are beating the door down for our stuff. We got the best product in town."

Nelson turned out over $15,000 the first day. Benny made his drops. Helen made her pick-ups. Gail met Helen and took the money to Dan. Sweets met Dan and counted the money. "That was a good day for the first day. Mr. Nelson is gonna have to double his work tomorrow to meet the demand," Sweets said.

By that following Sunday, Sweets' crew had sold over $90,000 in powder. "Well, I'm going to call Houston tonight. We've got just enough powder to last a week, according to Nelson."

Sweets called Rick. "Come on, I'll be ready. You must be eating that stuff! No, I just got a good mix man and your stuff is super."

Sweets and Gail left again for Houston. "This time we are going right to Houston and coming right back to Chicago."

"Don't you think we'll be taking a bigger chance?"

"Well, life is a chance, we will be out of product if we take the long way home, then we will have to do it all over again after this trip. I've got to figure out a way to get the stuff here without us having to go and get it. I'm gonna talk to Rick about that."

Rick met Sweets and Gail at the airport. This time Sweets did not have Helen with her, but she did have a tester, the kind the police use. You just put the powder in a tube and if the stuff turns purple, that's real. The darker the color, the stronger the stuff. "Remember," Rick said, "You don't use what you sell, even though I did not take my own advice. Now I'm paying for that mistake. You can't keep your crew from using, but you certainly should not."

"Rick, I'm sorry I can't stay and spend some time with you, I must get back home. I'm running out."

"I understand."

* * *

"But promise as soon as I get things going, I will fly you down and spend a few days with you."

"Oh yes, by the way, Rick, I've got to figure out a way to get the stuff to Chicago without me or Gail traveling so much."

"You right," Rick answered, "I know a couple of girls who would be glad to bring you the stuff, they themselves mules. But it's gonna cost you big money."

"I don't care, as long as it's fair, I'll pay."

"O.K. I set you up on the next run, but got to promise me you're coming back down for a visit."

"I promise."

Sweets returned to Chicago safe. Helen met her at the airport. "How did it go?"

"Everything went smooth. Take this to Noble, I'm going to meet Dan."

Sweets stopped at Dan's. "How are we doing, baby?"

"Just great, everything's running like clockwork."

"You back just in time, Mr. Nelson call last night and told me he was on his last run. Sweets, I don't like

the idea of you going and coming, carrying that stuff. There's too many chances of something going wrong, including a bad deal and someone gets hurt. You are the boss and the boss ain't the one to run."

"I know, I've made arrangements with Rick, he's going to get two mules to bring me the stuff."

"That a wonderful idea. You are sharp, my girl. Oh yes, check this out- I've come up with a promotional gimmick that will help my company grow and also take the heat off you gals' cars. I going on TV with all you ride your cars. Say 'I bought my car at Dandy Dan's' and on the cars will be a small sign say the same thing. And if anyone ask, they were given you girls for the promotion. I can use it as a tax write-off and that will keep the heat off all of you."

"Dan, that the best idea you've had yet. That will bust you company wide open, they will go through the roof."

"Yep! I figured as long as we are going to make a few millions, we might as well double it."

Dan's idea was a hit, the cars brought no heat. Matter fact, it made the girls quite popular around town. Sweets had moved into her 6th month of pregnancy and things were going very well, both for Sweets and Dan's car dealership. They were making money hand over fist, so much that Nelson had to hire two more helpers in the lab. Sweets and Dan had bonded and the crew had become well-oiled, so well, Sweets decided she would take a few days off and keep her promise to Rick. So she flew to Houston for some R and R. Needless to say how glad Rick was to see her. "What do you want to do and where do you want to go? You just name it."

"Where you'd like, I'm with you."

They flew to Cancun and had a wonderful three days.

"The only thing, I wish you had not been pregnant, that would have made our little fun trip complete."

Sweets put her arms around Rick and said, "Are you kidding?"

Then when the stuff was in the hotel, lo and behold, they got down.

What a wonderful three days for Sweets and Rick. When she returned to Chicago, she found everything in order, going well. Dan and Sweets decided it was time to meet the heat, so they gave a party inviting all the area police and their commander, including a couple of judges. They partied through the night and took very good care of them. It was time and money well spent. Now they had the heat in their pocket. That was about the time Dan asked Sweets, "Don't you think it's about time you should be thinking about moving into a bigger and better place?"

"Like what?"

"Like a lakefront condo. It the latest thing. You can get one for about 300 Gs, and right now that's chump change to you."

"I don't pay cash."

"Get it on time, you have a job as my secretary. You have the down payments, what's stopping you?"

So Sweets did just that, she landed a three bedroom condo on the lakefront. It was dope, I mean class, laid out to the max. She decided she would give a big housewarming. That's a grand party. As her and Gail were writing out the invitations, Sweets was going over the names of who she was to invite. When she got to Snake's name, Gail spoke up. "Oh! Didn't I tell you? Snake got busted while you were in the time before last."

"What! Look bitch, don't ever let nothing like that get by. I want to know everything that goes on. I might

have helped, after all he went out on a limb for, or do you remember?"

"Yes I do. I ask him if we could help, he said no, the bust was to clean and it was not local. It was the Fed, so he did not want to get you involved."

"O.K. Find out from his mother if he need anything."

"Will do!"

The condo was tough. Sweets had a retractable wall in her bedroom. If she dialed star*6 on her phone, the wall would open. That's where she kept some of her cash in stacks. Sweets had indeed arrived. As luck would have it, Benny ran a red light on one of his runs. The police pulled him over. Again, as luck would have it, Benny had left home and forgotten his wallet. The police cuffed him, then patted him down and found a gun. That led to a search of the car where they found four large packs of white powder. They took him to jail. Benny called Gail, Gail called Sweets, Sweets called the commander. Believe it or not, the powder wound up being sugar and the coke was never found, so the court threw the whole thing out. Is that justice or what? Coming out of the courtroom, Sweets said, "Benny, how could you run a red light knowing you were dirty as Hell? On top of that, forgot your wallet? Were you high!"

"No, things was going do fast, it just slipped my mind. It won't happen again, Sweets."

"It better not. You better take a few days off with pay. Let Helen make your runs till this blows over."

A few days later, Sweets' mules came in and told Sweets it was the last run they would make because Rick had gotten busted, so he was laying low and he had to stop his operation for a while. That left Sweets in a bind. "Now I gotta make a connect fast."

Sweets called Al and told him what had happened to Snake and Rick. She asked him if he had a connect anywhere. Al told her about New York, but he also warned her, "Be very careful, those boys up there are slick as grease."

Al gave Sweets a number to call. Sweets called New York and asked for Goldie. They told her to leave a number and he would get back with her, she left a pay phone number and waited. About 15 minutes later, the phone rang. "Sweets?"

"Yes."

"Goldie. What can I do for you?"

"Big Al told me to call. My Houston connect got bumped and I'm stuck with no work."

"What kind of work are we talking, girl? Maybe I can help you. Anything less than 40 keys, you got the wrong guy. That the number, that cost you 100 G's."

"That's kind of high."

"Take it or leave it."

"I don't know..."

"You're first time is always high."

"Well, I have no choice."

"Be at this number tonight, 10pm. I call you ad let you know what, when and where."

"O.K."

She headed to Dan and told what had happened and what she was about to do. "I don't know baby, that a lot of money and that's new grounds, new people. The money won't hurt us, I just don't want nothing to happen to you."

"Dan, life is a chance. We couldn't have come this far if we didn't take a chance. 40 k's takes a lot of dope."

"You're right, but that's a lot of money. O.K. You wait on the call and I'll figure the mode of transportation."

Sweets was at the phone at 10pm when Goldie

called back. "O.K. little sister, you're on. If I were you, I would drive, first off. We should meet early in the morning, just about daylight. You will come to a body and fender shop, 118 Ave. The name of the shop is Lenny's Auto Repair. I will meet you there on Friday at 6 am."

This was on Tuesday night. "O.K, I'll be there."

Sweets got in touch with Benny. "Benny, grab one change of clothes and 2 guns, we off to the Big Apple."

"O.K. what time do we leave?"

"As soon as Dan gets us ready. I'm on my way over there now."

When Sweets got to Dan's, Dan had a green station wagon, plain black tires, baggage carrier on top. "This is your car, now all I need is your size. Sweets said, "I'm a 9 and Benny is about a 38 long."

"O.K. I be right back."

Dan went inside and made a phone call. About half an hour later, a call pulled up. "Happy Costumes" was on the door. They got out, gave Dan the box and took out two army uniforms, one man's and one woman's. "This what you will be coming back in, your army be transferring to a different base. You should have no problems."

"Dan, you are something else."

"Oh, one more thing, you go at night and come in the day."

Sweets packed stuff, rolled the money up in a blanket and picked up Benny and they were on their way. Since it was just coming to the end of summer, the drive was very comfortable. They took their time, watched their speed, stopped along the way to eat, rested and back on the road. First through Indiana, then Ohio, then Pennsylvania and finally the Jersey Turnpike. They were kind new very few small town, not so many local police to be hassled with. When they

arrived in New York, Sweets was amazed. Benny had been to New York, so kind of knew his way around. Of course they still had problems with all that traffic, but handled it. They were about 2 hours early. Even at 4am, New York is busy, so Benny said, let's stop, I know where there's the best corned beef sandwich in the whole wide world, we still have time. Sweets agreed. "It's 5:30, we'd be going."

"O.K."

Benny and Sweets headed to Lenny's Auto Repair Shop. It was a spooky looking place, dimly lit. O.K. "Do we take our guns with us?" Sweets asked.

"Let's take one. I don't know how much good it do, I think they are ready for us and mean to do us."

Benny blew the horn and the door started to open. "Well, here go."

They pulled in and one guy pointed to a spot where they should go. Benny drove over to that spot, turned off the motor and waited for the man who walked up to the car. Sweets let the window down and asked, "Are you Goldie?"

"Are you Sweets?"

"Yes."

"Sit tight."

The man walked away. They waited for about ten minutes. "What's going on? What are they waiting for?"

"Maybe they're waiting for the stuff to get here."

Just then, the same man showed up again. "O.K. you wanna get out and come with me?"

Sweets and Benny got out of the car and followed the men into an office where, sitting behind the desk, was a blonde headed black man. "I'm Goldie."

"I'm Sweets. The stuff?" Sweets asked.

"You got the money?"

"Show me the stuff."

Goldie opened a small footlocker. "Now show me the money."

"I'll be right back."

Sweets went to the car, got the blanket, came back to the office, and opened the door.

Bang! Down went Benny.

Sweets screamed.

Bang!

Sweets dropped the blanket and fell to the ground. She felt herself fading, in a blur saw Goldie pulling the belt off his pants.

"Hey wait don't waste her," she heard him laugh. "I want some that."

Goldie raped her good and then he split with his gang, leaving Sweets for dead, in a pool of blood, her dress torn to pieces and the blanket soaked crimson red.

A passerby heard the gunshots and stopped a cop. The police went in to see what's was going on and found Benny and Sweets lying on the floor, blood all over the place. They rushed both of them to the hospital. Sweets came to briefly. "Where am I?"

"You're in the hospital. You've been shot and raped."

"My babies?"

"Your babies are fine, two girls. You were early but we saved them, so just rest."

Sweets blacked back out. When she woke up the next time, there were two plain-clothes cops standing over her. "Sweets, how do you feel?"

"I don't know everything kinda gray."

"Well you and your cousin were shot. Yesterday morning. Your cousin told us that you all were looking for an address, when these walked up to your car and forced you and he into this body and fender shop. Shot and robbed you. Is there anything else you can add that help us find out who did this?"

"No I not get a good look at them, they were black older men, I think."

"Men?" the police asked.

"Yes, I know there were at least two, maybe three."

"Well, if you nor your cousin got a good look at them, there's not too much we can do right now. Hon we will be back if we turn up something. Oh yes, you've got two lovely young ladies to be proud of. The doctors did a marvelous job saving your twins, and you for that matter."

"What about Benny, is he O.K?"

"Yes, going to be alright. Also, consider yourself blessed and very lucky. I don't always turn out like this."

As the police was leaving the hospital attendant walked in. "Hello Ms. Beasley, how are you feeling?"

"I guess I'm fine, how's my babies?"

"They're doing well, considering the fact they were almost 2 months early, but I think they will be just fine."

"Is it possible I could use the phone?"

"I'm afraid not. The rules are we must make all calls for you until the doctor clears you. So give me the information and I will make the call."

Sweets gave him Dan's phone number, he called Dan and told him what had happened. That was morning, by afternoon, Dan, Gail, and Helen in the lobby of the hospital. "You are a very popular lady, the phone has been ringing off the hook. And I've never seen people get here so fast from so far away. Will be able to see them, that's left up to the doctor. But since they came from so far, my bet is you will. We'll see."

"What about me seeing my babies?"

"Again, that the doctor's call. Just chill it's gonna be alright. Just relax. The doctor will be making his rounds soon. Then you can ask him everything you want know about."

Later, the doctor came in. "Miss Beasley, how are we doing? How you feel?"

"Kind of woozy."

"That's normal, after all you've been through these last couple day. Well the gunshot did not hit any vital organs, the bullet went right through your shoulder, you lost a lot of blood. But can fix, your girls are doing good. So I would say things are going well."

"How's Benny, my cousin?"

"Oh he's a knot on his head and a flesh wound, he be up and about in a day or two. You both were pretty lucky."

"Doctor, is it possible I see my babies?"

"Tomorrow. I don't want you get around just yet."

"What about my visitors downstairs?"

"I think that can be arranged. I'll look in on you later this evening. OK?"

"Thank you doctor."

A few minutes later, the door swung open and in walked the crew. "Well hello mother, we saw the twins."

"Oh Sweets, they're lovely."

"They I have not seen yet."

"Well you just wait, you are gonna flip."

"So what happen?" Dan asked.

"They shot me and Benny, took the money and stuck their dicks in me and split."

"Them motherfuckers."

"I'm not leaving New York until I find out who did this and get my dope or my money back."

"Now don't worry about that, right now I've got people here. They will find them. I promise they won't get away with this. We still got product, so we're not slowing down. Helen got a small connect. Detroit. That carry us till we make the right one. You just get well. I'm going with Helen, Gail will stay here in New York with you until you're able to come home."

"O.K. but I'm not coming home until I get those mother fuckers who got my money."

Helen and Dan returned home and Gail stayed on. Meanwhile, Dan called one of his gangster friends and told him what happened to Sweets. He told Dan, "Don't worry a score, that big someone knows something, and we will find out what and who. I pull put my feelers out and let you know something as soon as I get some feedback."

The next morning as Gail was combing Sweets' hair, the hospital attendant brought the babies in for Sweets to see. "Here's your little darlings."

Sweets could not hold them because they were so tiny – also because of her shoulder. She just looked and started to cry. "What are you crying about? You should be happy."

"I am, I am, they're so pretty. I'm going to name them Tracy + Lacy Beasley."

"Good names," said the attendant, "We going to keep them here for a couple of months. Then you can come back and get them when they are strong enough to travel. But we have got to get you up around."

"Thank you so much for what you people have done."

"That's our job. Right now I have to take them back. It's feeding time. You can see them again this evening."

"Well Sweets, what are you gonna do when the twins come home?" asked Gail.

"I'm gonna ask my mother to take care of them."

"She will. I know she will."

Just then, a head peeped in the door. "Well Hell. I thought you were in heaven."

"Benny. Hi baby how are you?"

"I'm fine just a scratch. I'm so sorry I got you in all this mess."

"Don't be, it comes with the job. How are you?" Benny asked.

"Well, my shoulder caught one, but other than that I'm fine. Well my cooch is a little sore."

"Oh va! You got girls, two little girls, that great! At least something good came out of all this mess. When did the doctor say you could go home?"

"Tomorrow."

"Good, you can head back and help Helen. Gail is staying with me, and I'm gonna stay awhile and see if

I can get our product or money back."

"O.K. the police told me car is at the station, nothing was taken as far as they could tell. I don't know if they saw the army uniforms, but when I get out of here, I will pick the car up and give it to Gail so you guys can drive back, if you get lucky and get our stuff back or what every."

"I will tell Dan and get ticket. Gail do you have any money?"

"I forgot to get some from Dan."

"Yes, he left me two grand and told me to call if I needed more."

"O.K. give Benny five hundred, that should carry you till you get home. Your plane ticket will be at the airport."

"As Benny walked out, the doctor walked in."

"Good morning ladies, Ms. Beasley how are feeling?"

"I'm feeling good?"

"That a good sign, let's take a look at that wound. O.K. it's coming along nicely. Well, guess you'll be going home, I'd say three or four more days. But the twins will have to remain here for a couple till they're strong enough to travel. So I just want you to take it easy and rest up, you've got a long trip ahead of you. Remember you lost a lot of blood, you're still kind of weak. It's gonna be awhile before you're back 100%, so don't push yourself."

When Benny got out the hospital the next day, he picked up the car. He gave the car to Gail and jumped a cab to the airport. When she got to the hospital, Sweets had talked to Dan. Dan's friends had found out who the guys were that stuck Sweets up and raped her and they were setting up a phony meeting for a drug buy next week. By that time, Sweets would be out of the hospital and she would be able to see them face

to face. "I can't wait till next week," Sweets told Gail, "I just can't wait."

"Well, gonna have so stop thinking about it."

"I wonder if they're going to bring real stuff," said Sweets.

"Ya!"

"They would not dare try that trick two times in a row. We just might get our powder back, thanks to my sweetie. Dan's the man, so just in case we get lucky, I want you to go to a army navy surplus store and buy a woman's army uniform. I already have one. We had two, but the other one is a man's that was Benny's. That's what we will wear on the way back home and you're gonna have to do most of the driving."

"O.K." answered Gail.

Two days and Sweets got out of the hospital and checked into a nearby hotel where Gail was already staying. Her and Gail enjoyed New York while waiting on the day when they would meet Dan's friends. Also, she could see her babies every day. Finally, the day came. The phone rang in Sweets' room.

"Hello?"

"Sweets?"

"Yes. This Bruno. Dan ask me to call you."

"Oh yes. Well we got everything set up. You gonna see your friend Goldie again this time the shoe will be on the other foot."

"I can't wait. When can we get together?"

"Today is fine with me. How about 3:00?"

"That good."

"O.K. I'll see you then."

At 3:00, everyone was right on time. They met in the dining room of the hotel.

"Sweets, I'm Bruno, this is Vinnie, and this is Hawk.

Now here's the deal, we pull word out that there was some powder for sale. A lot of powder, and Goldie took the bait. So we arranged to meet at a motel. Just outside the city. Matter, it's right by the Hudson River. We're going to put you in a room right next door to ours. You and Gail and Hawk will stay there till we knock on your door that connect the two rooms, then you and Gail and Hawk will crash down the door. We will get them with their pants down. Hopefully they will have the money with them. That's probably your hundred Gs they're going to be dealing with."

"Then what will we do with them?"

"Cut them up and throw them in the river to the sharks. We have a boat standing by, don't worry, it all set. You'll get your money back. Next time, try dealing with people mean biz, not rip-off artists, after we get your money. If you like, I know a guy in Miami who deals in large amounts of. I can set you up with him."

"That's just what I need. I don't deal in the stuff, just cars, that's my game. But every now and then I run across guys who do deal in powder. O.K. we are all set to go I want to get you in the motel early before the meeting in case they decide to come early and look the place over."

So the five of them got into Bruno's Caddie and headed for the motel. They checked Sweets and Gail in, and Hawk walked in a few minutes later. Later, Bruno and Vennie went into their room to wait for Goldie. They waited about 2 hours for a knock on the door. Bruno, opened the door. And it was none other than our man Goldie. "Bruno?" Goldie asked.

"Goldie?" Bruno asked. "Come in, this Vinnie."

Goldie said, "And this is Tank. O.K. let's get down to biz. What cha got?"

"I got fifty keys."

"How much?"

"120 Grand."

"That's pretty high."

"Top stuff don't come cheap."

"I got 100 grand, can we deal?"

"Let me see the money."

"Let me see the dope."

Bruno opened a briefcase. "There, fifty pack of Gold Medal flour. Now let me see the money."

Goldie open his briefcase and there was a hundred G's.

* * *

"Let me see your hands, gentlemen, both hands if you don't mind." Vinnie pulled off his Glock.

Bruno then pulled out his own Glock, stepped over the connecting door and knocked. The door flew open and out came Sweets, Gail and Hawk. "Well, here we are again," Sweets said.

Bruno said, "Let's get 'em out here before someone spots us."

"Hold on one minute. Hawk, put that bitch Goldie on the bed face up," said Sweets.

Hawk threw Goldie on the bed face up. Sweets said, "So you're the man that like pussy so right, well try this."

Sweets raised up her skirt and pulled off her panties and peed all over his face. "I wish I had to shit," Sweets spat through her teeth.

"O.K. let's get 'em out here!"

Bruno, Vinnie and Hawk lead them to a nearby dock where a boat was waiting. They put them in the boat and took off. They went about three miles into the Atlantic and stopped. "Come down below deck, we'll have a drink while Hawk and Vinnie do their thing."

Sweets and Gail and Bruno went down below deck, turned on music and Bruno poured them a drink, then there were two gunshots and minutes later there was a sound. Strange sound, sounded like a chainsaw. That went on for about an hour and then Vinnie and Hawk came down and said, "Let's have a drink. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.'

Gail asked, "What did they do with those two men?"

"Don't ask and you'll never know so you can never tell, O.K?"

"O.K."

"What's next?"

"We go home with our money. Bruno gonna give me a connect in Miami and that's where we head after the twins come home, or maybe before, it depends on how long and how much Detroit can handle. If they can carry us for a while, then we wait. If not, it's off to Miami, so we won't be needing those uniforms right. But we'll save them for our Miami trip if we need them."

Bruno gave Sweets the number she wanted and the name. Sweets and Gail got back to Chicago safe. It was a long but scenic ride. When they arrived, Sweets called Dan. "Hi darling."

"Hi, how do you feel?"

"Oh, I feel fine, we got our money back, and Bruno took care of Mr. Goldie."

"That my boys," Dan answered.

"How biz?"

"Pretty good. No problems here. But I don't know how long Detroit will last, off and on. You never know what they do till the last minute. And that just not good for an operation like ours."

"Will it hold up till the twins get here?"

"It have to, you can't go anywhere right now you've

got to rest and get well."

"I'm sure Detroit will last that long, but I would like to change as soon as we can. O.K. I think I'm going over to my mother's and feel her out about keeping the twins. I need that off my mind."

Sweets drove over to her mother's house. It had been a while since she saw her mother, and you could tell by the way they greeted each other. Ruth said, "Sweets baby, I really miss you. I've seen you on T.V. for that Dandy Dan guy. I'm so proud of you. Did you have your baby?"

"Yes, two of them. Lord almighty twins."

"Where? I want to see my grandbabies."

"That's what I came over to talk to you about. My girls are still in the hospital in New York, they were born a month and a half early so they had to stay until they got stronger. So I was wondering if you would keep them for me when they come home. You won't have to work, I will take care of you and them."

"You didn't have to ask me that, those are my grandbabies, my blood. Of course I will keep them for as long as you want me to."

"O.K. Of course you'll have build another room on to the house for a nursery. So five grand to get started."

"My God, that T.V. job sure pays a lot of money!"

"Yes Mother, it pays well."

"O.K. I'll start on the house right away."

"Thanks Mama. I love you."

"I love you too, baby."

Sweets left her mother's with a load off her mind. "Well that's that. My babies will have a good home and lots of love and tender care. Now back to biz."

Sweets stopped by Noble's to see Mr. Nelson. "Mr. Nelson, how are you?"

"I'm fine."

"That's good."

"Well we're moving right along. Dan has been very nice to me and have been working hard."

"How the stuff out off Detroit?"

"Not great, I wish it was more. But we been getting by, no complaints. It just make my job a little harder, but all in all it's been O.K. That's why we should have something new in a few weeks. I'm working on something now, it should pan soon O.K. Oh ya, kiss them two little ladies of yours for me."

"I will do that," answered Sweets.

With some peace of mind, Sweets just relaxed. Things were going well, her twins were getting stronger and she flew up there a couple of times to see them. Her and Dan were doing their thing. He would stop over often and she would lay it on him, then he'd go home to his wife. Speaking of Dan, Dan's dealership had grown so big, he bought the entire block, selling cars like Carter was selling liver pills. Matter fact, Dandy Dan had become a household name. Helen was still begging Sweets for some, and Gail and Nat got engaged. So a lot was happening for the crew. A couple of months went by and Sweets was told she could come get the twins. She and Gail hopped a plane and went for the babies. They brought them back and Ruth Beasley was thrilled. Detroit was starting to dry up, so Sweets had to get back on the case. She called Miami, that was the connect that Bruno had given her, and she talked to Twigs, a big-big-really-big dealer. Twigs was a Cuban with ties to Panama. Twigs and Sweets talked to each other a few times and he invited her down. Dan was alright with this, because it had come from his people, so again the Beasley sisters was on the road again. They flew

Miami where they met Twigs. He was a heavy coke user and very young, about thirty-five. Slick sharp dresser, up on his game, driving a Ferrari, and living in a pent house on the top of a first class hotel, just living the life they talked. Twigs gave Helen a sample and Helen stood up on her head. "Damn! This is the best dope I've ever had. Damn damn damn!"

"How much can I get?

"As much as you want."

"Get out of here!" Sweets screamed.

"I've got mules, so you don't take no chances carrying," said Twigs. "You pay my man on delivery and we just keep moving."

Sweets and Helen and Gail flew back to Chicago with a small sample and gave it to Mr. Nelson. Nelson tested it. "I can make five times as much, that's how strong it is. And you will still have the best powder in town."

"Are you kidding me?"

"I don't kid, Sweets. This is mother pearl, ninety percent pure."

"Well let's get biz."

She went to Dan. "Dan, Twigs got what we want. Bruno knew what he was talking about. And we don't even have to carry it, it comes to us!"

"What a set up. Well let's go, how much should we order?"

"Two keys."

"There's room at Nobles for that much?" asked Dan. "We will have to up his sally."

"That's no problem," Sweets said, "We will sell to them. That way we got the whole show."

"You sure you want to do that?"

"Oh yes. And Helen. The man, he'll be glad to do

biz with her. That way, the dope will be the same all over town."

"You'd better talk to Helen first and see how she feels about that."

"O.K. I will."

Sweets called Helen and met with her. She told her, "I think that will work. I'll talk to Jabo, the other drug kingpin."

He it hook line and sinker. He called Sweets. "It's all good, Jabo said name your price."

"Right, I make the order and get back to you."

Sweets called Twigs, "I'm ready, how's a fat hundred?"

"O.K. That's two hundred grand plus trans."

"Two hundred and twenty Gs, that a good price."

"The more you buy, the cheaper it get."

"When will I see the show?"

"They will call when they're in your town. We give dates or times. Just stay close to a phone and be ready to deal, my people hit and run. You can start counting your money now. We be in touch."

"Oh O.K."

Then Sweets called Dan. "We need two hundred twenty G's for a hundred keys."

"That's not bad. When do you need it?"

"They don't give times or days. He said just start counting the money."

"O.K. I have it tomorrow, I know it won't be no sooner than that. I put it in a duffle bag, Helen can pick it up and bring it to you."

"O.K."

Helen met Dan the next morning and picked up the money and dropped it off to Sweets. Sweets stashed it and waited on Twigs' call. Two days later, the phone

ranged. "Hello, may I speak to Sweets?"

"This Sweets."

It was a woman. "This Miami, we're here."

"O.K. where are you?"

"We're at the state line between Gary and Chicago at the triple A trucking freight yard in a white truck."

"I'll be there in an hour."

Sweets rushed over to Noble Funeral Home where she met Benny. They got one of Noble's hearses and headed for the freight yard across the state line. When they arrived, there was a white truck. "Pull alongside, Sweets. Yes, a hearse, that's smart. Me and your driver will transfer the stuff while you and Miami count out the money."

It was all done in an hour. "O.K. the money's right and we are on our way. See you next time."

Sweets and Benny rolled back into Chicago in the hearse and back of Nobles and unloaded the stuff. "Well done," Mr. Nelson said. "Just put all of it in the basement. It's nice and cool down there."

After they unloaded, Mr. Nelson went to work. He called to Sweets, "This is the best stuff I've seen in a while. You can call Benny. I be ready in about two hours."

"O.K. Oh by the way Nelson, I'm making a deal with Jabo, so when I talk to him, I would like for you to be ready for a large order."

"O.K. just let me know."

Sweets called and told her to let Jabo know the shipment was in and he could have samples by the evening. Helen got in touch with Jabo and made arrangements for him to get his samples. When Jabo got his samples, two hours later, he was on the phone to Helen. "Get me ten keys right away, this stuff is fine."

In two days, the stuff was all over town. Everybody was happy. The police could not understand. "How did this kind of stuff slip by us?"

"Everybody's got it and it's damn good stuff."

"We have got to find out where it's coming from and who it's going to."

"Damn, I've never seen it like this before. Everybody's happy but us. And the chief is very upset."

Jabo's stuff moved so fast, he was back in the next week with another order and Sweets was moving twice as fast. In six weeks, Mr. Nelson told Sweets she had better make the call, they were down one week's supply. Sweets had cleared almost a kool million of that shipment alone. So she made the call and they did it again.

* * *

By this time, Sweets had gone and went to New York and picked up the twins and had brought them home to her mother's. Sweets' operation was going so good. She told Gail, "I think I'm going to take a week off. I need the rest."

Gail agreed. "You have been at it pretty hard, where are you going?"

"I think I'll go to Miami and visit Twigs, he knows all the happening places and he's jazzy."

"Do you want me to tag along?"

"No I want you here to look over things. You and Dan keep things rolling."

Sweets called Twigs and invited herself down to Miami. When she got there, Twigs was waiting with open arms. He showed her the town. They partied all night and slept all day. It was about the middle of the week, Twigs and Sweets were out on the town and Sweets got drunk. Well, almost drunk. They ended

up at Twigs' penthouse apartment. Twigs went into his pocket and pulled out a pack of coke. "Here, have a hit."

"No, I never fuck around."

"Ah, come on, it ain't gonna hurt you. It'll make you feel good."

"It will?"

"Hell yes, it make you feel like you're on cloud nine."

"Well O.K , just a little."

That was Sweets' biggest mistake. Once she took her first hit, she couldn't stop. Twigs and Sweets freaked off all night long, and the following three days, she kept on doing it. When she returned to Chicago, she was not the same Sweets. She kept her little secret well. But Helen and Gail could notice a change in Sweets. She became very short tempered. Even Dan could see the change, but thought it was just pressure. He thought that maybe she was just getting stressed out due to her very long operation.

Meanwhile, Gail was getting very popular with the guys. She was dressing better, looking better, even though she was engaged to Nate. But him being so far away for a long period of time was a strain on their relationship, and that caused Gail to do a little dating on the side. One evening while Benny was driving on one of his runs, his homies stopped him and told him someone got bad dope from one of his girls. Benny asked, "Which one?"

"The one on 79th street."

So Benny went right to Sweets and told her what happen. "That bitch, she done went private enterprise, selling her dope on my spot."

She called Helen and told her what happened. "What do you want me to do, beat her ass or what?"

"No, I want you to pick her up after they close up and then come get me. Then we're going for a ride."

"O.K."

Helen picked up the girl and went by Sweets, got her and they drove off toward the state line. At the line was a bridge. "Get out of the car, bitch. Who do you think you fucking with, selling that bullshit on my spot?"

"I was just trying to make a little extra money."

"Oh yeah, well here's your pay."

Sweets pushed her off the bridge, about a two hundred foot drop to the water. Below, it was dark and all you could hear was a low scream and then a splash. "Let's go, Sweets." She and Helen got back in the car and drove back to Chicago.

"That was a bit much, Sweets."

"Well, that will put everybody on notice. I ain't takin' private enterprise from crew."

Helen drove to Sweets place. "Come up for a while and get yourself together."

"Yes, Lord I could use a little right about now."

When they got in and sat down, Sweets went to her bedroom and came back with a plate full of coke. "Here, knock yourself out."

Helen took a couple of hits and Sweets grabbed the plate. "Oh Hell, no not you," said Helen.

"Shut up and give me the damn plate."

Sweets grabbed the plate and took two big hits. "Well, I be damn," said Helen. "I knew something had come over you."

"You'd better keep your damn mouth shut."

They hit the plate a few more times and Helen started to look at Sweets. "What your problem?"

"You. I want you. I can make you feel good. I've

been wanting you for a long time."

Then she grabbed Sweets and kissed her and the shit was on. Helen turned Sweets out that night.

Sweets thought that she was just doing it to keep Helen quiet, but that was just the beginning of Sweets' voracious appetite for sex that was growing. Helen got what she always wanted and Sweets knew she had Helen hooked. So it was a trade-off. Helen quickly found a new replacement girl, but the whole crew knew Sweets had something to do with her death.

Nate came home again on leave. It didn't take long for him get word that Gail had been dating other guys. He wasn't very happy to hear that. He went to Gail and asked her about the rumors and she admitted she had been dating around. Nate broke off the engagement.

When Sweets found out about the breakup, she asked Nate, what happened. Nate told her and she was furious. "That bitch, I told her a long time ago not to fuck with you and she did it anyway. That's it. I'm through with that whore and I'm gonna fuck her up. I don't care if she is my friend. Blood is thicker than water. I don't know where, when or how, but she's gonna pay. I'll just keep my cool till the right time."

Sweets and Nate enjoyed his stay at home together. They went all over town, having fun buying things for the twins and their mama. Sweets even bought Nate a thousand dollar ring and watch. When Nate left to return to his ship, he had no idea when he would see his sister again, and he prayed she would be safe. Nate loved Sweets with all his heart. Sweets did not let Gail know she was very upset with her. She just acted like, "Oh well, it happens to the best of us," but deep down in Sweets' heart, she was very pissed at Gail.

Things were still going well in spite of Sweets' growing habit. Now she was doing as much coke as Helen, and Helen had been doing coke for years. She was slowly becoming unglued and losing control of what she once had in total control. Dan even noticed one night on his usual visit how over-sexed she acted. "Sweets baby, this ain't you. You don't usually walk around butt naked and running back and forth to your bedroom. What's going on? You can talk to me. I'm your man. Are using that stuff? If you are, we need to get you some help right away before it's too late."

"Yes, Dan. I can't lie to you, you've been good to me."

"Well I'm here for you baby, you've been under so much pressure. I can almost understand why it happened. But you have got to try and get back in control of things. We have too much to lose, baby."

That settled Sweets down for a little while but not long before she pulled another blunder. Benny came by Sweets' condo to drop off some money because Dan was out of town on some biz. Sweets opened the door but she forgot to lock it. Benny came in and sat down on the couch. Sweets had already been tooting that day since early and she was pretty wound up. While she was counting the money, she asked Benny, "Benny, why don't I ever see you with a girl?"

Benny answered, "I take my father's advice, I never drive my Cadillac to work."

"Oh. But you used to doing it?"

"Oh yeah, as often as possible."

"Do you get high? Tell me the truth."

"Not around my crew," Benny answered.

"What around your boss?"

"No way."

"There's always a first time."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Oh hell, I'm horny. Let's fuck!"

"I'm all for that!"

They went into Sweets' bedroom and Benny tapped it up. Gail always did have the downstairs key but not the key to the apartment door. So when she let herself in the downstairs door, she went upstairs and the door was ajar, so she walked in. She heard Sweets moaning, "Get it baby, get it baby."

She hurried up, backed out the door, pulled it shut and then knocked. It took a while before Sweets open the door. "Come in baby!"

"What's going on, Sweets?" asked Gail.

"Nothing, I just wanted to see if you had heard from Benny and wanted to take you to lunch."

"Yeah, Benny's here."

Benny came out of the bedroom with his pants unzipped. "Oh, there you are," said Gail, "I didn't see you on the spot."

"Dan's out of town. I made my drop here."

"You hungry?" Gail asked.

"Yeah, let's go eat," Benny answered.

"I'm with you. I could use some coffee," Sweets added.

The trio went to lunch, Sweets not knowing Gail had peeped her game. While they having lunch, Sweets said, "Gail, I hear you got yourself a new guy."

"Yes, he's a lawyer and his name is Mike. He's one hell of a guy and I'm crazy about him."

"That's good, I'm glad you're happy. Why don't we throw a party this weekend. I'm bored."

"Sounds like a winner to me," Benny added.

"O.K., tell the crew, this coming Saturday, we're partying at my place."

Gail and Benny passed the word and everybody

started to prepare for the big party. Helen brought her girl and Gail brought Mike. Matter fact, everybody brought somebody. Even Dan was there. They had everything you could think of to eat and drink. The party was going strong. People were having a good time, some were tooting and some were drinking and some were eating. Sweets was eyeballing Mike, thinking to herself, "That's my shot, a chance to get even with that bitch for what she did to my brother, and get some of that beef. So all I need now is a plan."

The next day, she called Dan. "Dan, let's take a week off and go somewhere, maybe take Gail and her new guy."

"Where do you want to go?" Dan asked.

"I don't know, maybe the Bahamas."

"Let me see if I can arrange that."

"Sounds like a good idea, I'll call you back."

Dan was on the case and worked everything out so the weekend trip was on, then Sweets called Gail. "Gail, how would you like to go to the Bahamas with me and Dan and your guy?"

"Yes, hell yes! Let me call Mike right now and see if he can get away."

"O.K! But call me back right away. I've got to let Dan know so he can get the tickets."

A half hour later, Gail called Sweets back. "It's on, let go."

"O.K."

Sweets called Dan and the trip was set.

They left late that Thursday night and arrived in the Bahamas early that Friday morning. It was a beautiful day, the sun had just come up and people were just beginning to come out. "Well, what do we do first?" asked Dan.

Mike said, "I want to go deep sea fishing."

"You two go head, me and Gail will go shopping," said Sweets, "I don't want no part of deep sea fishing."

Later that evening, Dan and Mike came in from the water and Sweets and Gail had shopped 'til they almost dropped. They planned dinner in a few hours. While everyone was resting, Sweets went to the office and rented another room. She paid cash in another name, telling the clerk she was expecting another guest. Later at dinner, Sweets and Dan and Gail went dancing. Dan danced with Sweets, and then with Gail, Sweets with Dan and then with Mike. While she was dancing with Mike, she slipped the door key in his pocket with a note saying, "Meet me at 3 AM". Well, needless to say, Mike was not going to turn that down. So at three while Gail and Dan was fast asleep, Mike and Sweets met and got it on.

When they returned to Chicago, they were very rested and ready to face the world again. "We had a great time! Thanks for the lovely trip, Dan, Gail and I had a ball. Mike, did you enjoy yourself?" Sweets asked.

"Very much, we must do this again soon," Mike added, looking right at Sweets.

"Well, back to work. I've got cars to sell."

Sweet's first stop was Mr. Nelson. "How's things going, Mr. Nelson?"

"You are not going to believe this but you need to make that call, we're getting low again."

"Again? My Lord, what are these dope heads doing with this stuff, eating it?"

"Not really. Let's face it, Sweets, the stuff is good and when it's this good, it sells. And now that you've got Jabo, that all the more reason for it to be moving today."

While Sweets was driving home, Helen pulled up along side her. "Hey, vacation lady."

"Baby, what new?"

"Jabo just called, he want another order."

"O.K. tell him I'm bringing the case, meanwhile I think Nelson can handle that. I'll call and call you back."

"OK."

Sweets went home and called Nelson first. "Can you handle Jabo?"

"Yes, is it the same order?"

"I think so. If so, just give him ten."

"O.K."

"Benny will pick it up and give it to Helen, I'll make another order. We should have it in three or four days."

"I hope so, we are sure gonna need it."

Sweets then called Twigs and ordered her shipment.

By that time, Sweets had amassed over two million dollars. She was rolling in dough. Her wall was full of money, and more was coming in. Later that evening, Helen came by and dropped off the money from Jabo. After she left, Sweets was counting the money when the downstairs doorbell ranged. "Who's there?"

"Mike."

"Mike! Come on up."

Sweets open the door and Mike grabbed and kissed her. "I've been thinking about you all week. I miss you."

"I've missed you too."

They made love all over the money. When Mike left, Sweets said to herself, "Damn, this is getting deep. I'm beginning to like this guy."

Three days later, the shipment came in without any problems. But Sweets' habit was getting bigger and bigger, and Mike and Sweets were seeing each other more and more. Sweets called Gail and asked her to pick up the twins. She had not seen them in a couple of weeks and her mother had called to see if she was OK. Gail picked up the twins and brought them over to Sweets' place. They both played with the girls for a while and Gail said, "I've got to run, Mike and I are going to dinner."

Sweets said, "O.K. I'll take them back over to Mom's."

Gail went home, got dressed and Mike picked her up. They went to Leo's, a really nice dinner spot. They had dinner, and Mike was acting kind of strange. "What's wrong, baby? Something happen in court today that's got you feeling bad?"

"No, but there's something I've got to tell you, and just don't know how..."

Gail said, "Simple, just tell me."

"O.K. Gail, I've been seeing Sweets and I think I'm in love with her."

Gail dropped her glass. "You jive motherfucker! You've been fucking my best friend!"

She threw the drink in his food and got up and walked out. Mike felt relieved that he had come clean with Gail, but he had no idea what he had really done.

A couple of days passed and Sweets had not talked to Gail. "That's odd, I have not talked to Gail in a couple of days."

When Helen came by, she asked, "Helen, have you talked to Gail?"

"No, I thought maybe you had sent her out of town for something."

"No! That's not like Gail, something's up."

She picked up the phone and dialed Gail's number. No answer. "Something's up, Helen, hit the streets and see what's going on."

"O.K."

Helen left. Sweets tried the number again. No answer. So she called Gail's mother. Her mother had not talked to her for three days. "Hell no, something's wrong, really really wrong. Maybe her and Mike slipped off. That's it, her and Mike. Why didn't I think of that in the first place?"

So Sweets relaxed. Dan called just see how she was doing. Sweets ask Dan, "You haven't by any chance seen Gail, have you?"

"No, why? I have not seen her for two days, maybe three. I don't keep up the days."

"Dan, two or three days?"

"That's you right arm."

"I don't understand that. I'll see if I can get in touch with Mike. Maybe he knows where she is."

"O.K. Call me back and let me know if you find out anything. I'll be here in case she calls. Don't worry, I don't think nothing has happened to her. She'll pop up.

"O.K. talk to you later."

About two hours later, Dan called back and told Sweets he had talked to Mike, and Mike told him the last time he saw Gail, they had dinner together and they had a misunderstanding, Gail left out very upset and he had not talked to her or seen her since. "Do you have Mike's number?"

"Yes."

Dan gave Sweets Mike's number and Sweets called Mike. Mike said, "I told her I was in love with you."

"You what? No you didn't, no you didn't! Do you know what you've done? You've fucked up everything. God damn it, you've fucked up everything."

She slammed the phone down. She grabbed her bottle of coke and took a hit. "Shit, this all fucked up."

She called Helen. "Helen, find Gail. I think some shit is up. Find her and call back."

Little did Sweets know that Gail had gone to the police and told them everything and the police had her in protective custody.

That day, Benny called Sweets. "The police have busted all our spots, all the girls are in jail."

"What?"

"That's right, all of them are in jail."

Then Helen called. "Sweets, the police just got Noble and Mr. Nelson, they found all the powder. I call you back as soon as I know more."

"OK."

Sweets hung up and called Dan. Dan's secretary answered the phone. "No, Sweets, Dan's not here. The police came in an hour ago and arrested him. I don't know what for."

Sweets hung up the phone. "Damn, this is fucked up."

Sweets got dressed and headed for Helen's house. When she pulled up, they were taking Helen away in handcuffs, so she slowly pulled away. Then she started looking for Benny. She asked a couple of his homies. "Benny got busted about an hour ago."

"Damn, that's everybody." She shot back home. "I'd better get the hell out of here 'til I can figure out what do."

When she pulled up in front of her condo, eight police cars pulled up, some in back of her and some in front and on both sides. They took her out of the car, cuffed her and took her to jail. Sweet's bond was half a million dollars, so was Dan's. The rest of them had a hundred fifty grand each. Dan got a lawyer who got everybody out on bond. "Well, it's over. We have a chance off beating this, but it's gonna cost us big. The police searched my house but they did not find the money in my stash."

"That good cause we're gonna need it if we intend to beat this."

"Gail is going to rat on us and go into the witness plan. So she's out of reach. I don't think they can touch my biz. Dan said since it's a corporation indictment, it's only for me."

"But it's gonna take big money to save you, Sweets, and we've got to look out for the other."

"I'm gonna talk to people who know some people and see what's it gonna cost us. In the mean time, everybody stay clean. Don't even spit on the street 'til this thing's over."

* * *

It was the biggest bust in Chicago history. It was all in the paper, on radio, on TV. I mean, it was BIG. Sweets' mother was shocked. Sweets still had her stash of money but she did not know how much it was going to cost to beat case, so she had to lay low. Dan called in all his markers. The trial was put off three or four times. The lawyer was doing everything. Everyone was on pins and needles. "Well," Dan said, "It was fun while it lasted."

Sweets asked, "Dan, will it cost us our whole stash?"

"I don't think so. But I'll know soon. This case so big, they have got to find a loophole before any judge will touch it. And they have strong case."

"Well we will just have to cross our fingers, I think we should give all the crew some now, just in case. They don't have any thing to live on."

"How are we going to give it to them?"

"Just give it to them. They are watching us that close now, they think they have us bagged."

So Dan and Sweets counted their stash. "Four million three hundred thirty thousand. That's the total stash, let's take the three hundred thirty thou and split it up between the crew. That will leave us with four, if we're lucky we should come out of this with two each. That will keep for the rest of our lives if we're smart."

So they gave the crew their share and waited on the magic number.

Three days later, it came: two million. They found a loophole where everyone could walk. Sweets felt good. "Well, I'll still be a rich bitch. So it was worth it after all. I can take care of my babies and open me a small biz, buy my first flat building. For income, sell

my condo, buy me a small house."

Dan called her. "O.K. we go on trial Friday morning. If everything goes right, it will be all over Friday afternoon."

"I'm ready Dan. Let's have a party Thursday night.

"That sound good. That will get our mind off the trial."

So everybody came. They had everything, including drugs. They got down and partied all night. "Let it roll, we be ready tomorrow. It'll be all over and we will have made our mark on this town."

"We did it good, and we did it big. After tomorrow, we sit back and cool it. Everybody got enough money to get on if handled right. You won't ever be broke again. So everybody go home get dressed and let's meet the man later this morning and get our walking papers, put all this bullshit behind us."

"We beat 'em, we won."

Everybody left Sweets' place feeling good and ready for court. It was 9:00 am Friday morning. The reporters were lined up asking all kinds of things. The courtroom was packed. At 10:30, they entered the courtroom. "All rise. The Cook County court is now in session, Judge Harry Bratz presiding."

The D.A. stated his case and sat down, then the defense attorney made his motion. "Your honor, I move the case be dismissed on grounds of illegal search and seizure."

The police did not have a search warrant when they entered Noble Funeral Home. The D.A. was stunned. "Case dismissed."

He threw it out, the whole damn case. It was over. Just like that.

Sweets felt a cold trickle of sweat run down her

neck, into her dress. She heard the cheers from her gang as she stood up, pushing the Italian sunglasses up on her nose. She turned toward the newspaper people and their blazing flashbulbs. "Miss Beasley!" they were all shouting, "Miss Beasley!" They wanted a comment. "Miss Beasley!" Breaking into a beautiful smile, she said in a honey girl voice, "Please, call me Sweets!" The courtroom went berserk. The cameras flashing so hard it was blinding. Even Judge Bratz was whooping. She would remember that man.

Sweets was escorted through the hub bub out the courthouse. Mr. Noble had pulled up his best limo, with NOBLE FUNERAL HOME painted on the glass. He was holding the door open for her. Dan was waiting in the back seat, so was Helen. They squealed when Sweets stepped into the cool, leather interior of the Cadillac. Helen popped a cork and laughed, "Oh Sweets, you're free!" Mr. Noble was at the wheel.

"Where to, Sweets?" he asked.

Sweets settled back into the leather seat, between Dan and Helen. They cuddled up to her on each side, kissing her cheeks. Sweets ran her hand up each of their legs. Then, they all looked at each other, and burst into laughter.

"Mr. Noble, we need a nice quiet place to relax."

"I got the quietest place in town Sweets, you're welcome to party there. Just don't wake the dead!"

THE END

I Wanna Know Why

* * *

Growing up, I was spoiled—an only girl child with seven uncles plus my mother and father. My father gave me everything I thought I wanted. My mother gave me the love and protection of a princess. She was a beautiful and smart Black woman. She had the love of a lamb and the strength of a bull. She had no enemies. Everybody loved her. She was a great singer and she had some fame. Some times she would get upset with me and she would say, "You just like someone else I used to know." I never gave it a thought then. But every now and then I heard my grandmother say, "Why don't you tell her?" And my mother would go into a rage.

* * *

My grandmother had raised my mother and my five uncles all by herself, in a small house in Chicago, with no help from any man, or from the government. My grandfather had died when my mother was a little girl and my grandmother had worked day and night supporting that family. My grandmother was a saint. There had been a neighbor boy named Billy, whose mother had been a crack head and heroin addict. She died from an overdose when Billy was thirteen. His father was somewhere on the West Coast, but nobody knew how to get hold of him. When the DHS moved in to put him in foster care, my grandmother, being the loving person she was, asked if she could take him until his father was located. The DHS approved temporary custody, so he came to my mother and grandmother's home as part of the family. He and my mother were about the same age. They were raised together and became very close. My father grew up in the same neighborhood, and was my youngest uncle's best friend all through the years. He always had a crush on my mother. Matter of fact, he was madly in love with her, and the whole family was on his side and hoped one day my mother would marry him. My mother loved him, but not the way she loved Billy. Those two just loved music. Billy had hoped someday he would become a record producer and my mother was a great singer and aspired to be a recording artist. They did a lot of secret things together. They slipped out and smoked pot together. They drank a little together. They talked about everything, their lives, their friends, family, politics, jokes.

Billy's father was located right around this time and Billy moved out to the West Coast to be with his Dad, who was a big time minister with a big time church. Billy longed to get into the music biz, but his father wanted him to take over his church when he retired,

so Billy gave up his own dream and started following his father's plan.

With Billy gone, my father asked my mother for the hundredth time to marry him, and to his surprise, she said yes and wanted to get married right away. They married a week later and my mother got pregnant the next day. My father was overjoyed. My mother had started a singing career and was doing well, but my father could not stand for her to be out there with all those men drooling at her, so he made her give it up, using the pregnancy as his excuse. He was insanely jealous about her. In truth, she was a terribly beautiful woman. When I was born, my hard-working, stable kind of guy father just worshipped me. My father gave me anything I wanted, within his capability.

Meantime, Billy, with his charismatic personality and good looks-- tall, slender, deep pretty eyes-- took over his father's ministry and became the Number One pastor on the West Coast. His church had grown by leaps and bounds. Matter of fact, he was one of the first ministers to attain a national TV show. He had totally blown up. And I had totally grown up. My grandmother loved to watch gospel TV shows. One day, while she was watching TV and flipping the channels, she came up on a large choir singing a very beautiful gospel song, so she left it there, and when the pastor came on, she cried out, "Lord, that man look just like Billy!" She had not heard from Billy in some years. She called my mother, "Don't that look like Billy? That is Billy! I would know him anywhere!" Mother said, "I knew he was going to be somebody one day." My grandmother wrote him that very night, and a few days later, Billy answered my grandmother's letter. It was heartwarming and very moving. He wrote he was very sorry he had not gotten in touch with all of them and promised he would stay in touch going forward. Billy's

fame grew so large 'til he was advised to go on tour, Chicago being one of his stops. He was very willing to go. After the tour was announced, Grandmother and my mother planned a big, bad BBQ for him in his honor. They invited everyone who knew Billy through the years. It was going to be a day to be remembered and it truly was just that. With all the hullabaloo over Billy's reunion with my Grandmother, my father became enraged. He became variably abusive toward my mother and a hatred grew in his heart for Billy. He could not stand to hear Billy's name, and the fact that my mother and Billy were so close made him very, very insecure. The buzz was that Billy was coming back to town a winner. My mother's youngest brother was my father's best friend, but he had become a drug addict, although he was still a very sweet and humble person. Along with the rest of the family, he too loved and admired Billy and was looking forward to seeing him. Just a few days before Billy was to appear in Chicago, my father told my mother she could not attend the honorary BBQ. This was devastating to my mother. She became totally depressed. The fact was, her husband had ordered her not to go to the BBQ to see the man who she had shared a lot of her young life with. When my grandmother realized what was going on, she went to my father and pleaded with him to let my mother come to the BBQ. "No," said my father. My grandmother took to bed and would not get up. Her boys stood by her bedside. "What's wrong, Momma?" my uncle asked her. My grandmother told him, "I'd rather die than not see my daughter come to Billy's homecoming." She told my uncle that my father had forbidden my mother to go. My grandmother also said that my father had said that Billy was not welcome in the family home, ever. My uncle was furious. He came to me and my mother's home and demanded to see

my father. He told him that if my mother did not show up at that BBQ, their friendship would be over and he might do something very bad to him. So my father changed his mind and acted like he was also looking forward to seeing Billy. He knew he had crossed the line and that he had offended the matriarch.

When I first saw Billy at the BBQ, I got a funny feeling in my body. He was a gorgeous man, he dressed like a movie star. He was tall, thin and had deep brown eyes. His voice was very deep and when he looked at you, you could feel him going all the way through you. He would look at my mother and she would leave the room, then after five or ten minutes, she would return. I didn't think anything of it. His smile was devastating. He ruled the room. At night when I was sleeping, I would dream about him and wake up in a cold sweat, my panties wet. I got out of my bed and went into my grandmother's room and got in bed with her, shaking. She wrapped her arms around me. "I'm so sorry for you, child. One day when you become a woman, God will show you. You are going to have a life like none other. Sometimes there things we should not know. Things happen that is not explained. You will never know why. But nothing will happen to you if you have done nothing wrong. It takes all kinds of people to make a world and you are one of those kind of people who will never know why things happen in your life. Every family has secrets. So do we. But you are going to live much different than a lot of people. You're gonna be happy. You're gonna be sad. You're gonna be blessed. You're gonna be cursed. You're gonna have more than a lot of people, but you're gonna pay more. You will find a good man that won't be your problem, like so many women. But your love life will always be a mystery because of a rumor that was never answered. And only one person could

have solved it, your mother. But she would never in her lifetime answer that, so you accepted what she told you because you loved her so much. You never believed she would lie to you, so you would not doubt her word. That I will regret to this day, because I still don't know.

We didn't know it then, but we found out soon enough. My dope addict uncle was a bank robber. He had robbed over fifteen banks. We had no idea. He was a hardworking man, we thought, in spite of everything. But he always had some money. Not a lot, but just enough. When my grandmother asked him to do anything, he would do it. I really looked up to him. He would come over and give my grandmother some money. Not a whole lot of money, just enough. He never dressed flashy, he always wore work clothes, 'til one night he came over to give my grandmother some money and, by mistake, he pulled out a big bankroll. He had been drinking and while he was going in his pockets, he dropped his roll. Nothing but hundreds fell on the floor. There was so many hundred dollar bills, my grandmother asked him how did he get that much money? He told her he had hit the lottery and my grandmother believed him. Later, maybe two or three weeks later, the FBI knocked on the door. They were nice. They told my grandmother they wanted to talk to my uncle. She asked why, then they told her he was suspected of a bank robbery and had taken from the banks over $100,000. My grandmother told them, "You must be looking for the wrong man". Then the FBI agent asked her to show them any money he had given her. She showed the FBI agent the money. It was marked bills. My grandmother fell down to her knees. She shouted out, "Oh Lord, what have I done to deserve this?" My grandmother said, "I'm going to

call Billy," and so she did. Billy flew to Chicago straight away. My grandmother told him what was going on, and he went directly to the FBI and asked them if he could talk to my uncle and bring him in. They said yes. Billy talked to my uncle and told him he was killing his mother. He told Billy, "I will surrender but I'm going to keep the money." Billy met my uncle and took him in. Billy stayed at our house two days, during which my father would not let my mother go to my grandmother's house. Billy paid my uncle's bond. I had just started working for an investment company and the day Billy was to leave, he asked me to go to dinner because he wanted to find out what was going on. As I sat with him, my heart started pumping out of control. He told me that if he ever married, it would be to someone like me. I would have given him my body right then if he had asked, but he didn't. I knew then, he was the man I was going to marry, he could just make everything work. I could not sleep for days and nights without thinking of him. Then the worst thing happened-- my third uncle was shot and killed at a bar. This was too much for my grandmother. She became very ill. And here was my mother, in a bad marriage. I was too stressed out to date anybody. I called Billy and told him that my family was coming apart and I did not know what to do. He asked me to come to California and paid for my ticket. I told my father I was going to the Job Corps and he was okay with that. When I arrived in California, Billy picked me up. I told him everything that was going on in my mind. He said, "Just relax, honey. You're here now and you are safe." When we pulled up to his house, I was shocked. His home was beautiful and I had a safe feeling. There were people there answering his every wish. They put me in one of his guest rooms, and for the first time in my life, I felt secure. After a few days,

I asked Billy, "Should I go back home?" He told me it was left up to me, and that I could stay with him or go back home. He said, "Your mother might need you. She is all alone." So I agreed to go back home. When I returned, I told my father I had changed my mind about the Job Corps. My grandmother was very sick from all the trauma. I visited her at the hospital and she told me, "I want Billy to preach my funeral." Two days later, she died. I called Billy and told him. He flew in the next day. It was a sad but well-run funeral. Billy had asked for my uncles to be there and they all carried the casket. It was all very beautiful. Billy paid for everything and asked me to come back to California with him and start a new life. My mother had no idea I had any special feelings for Billy, and said, "Yes, go," but my father said, "No." I was a grown up nineteen year old, so I left with Billy, who made me one of his staff. It was perfect. I had a good position and Billy treated me with total respect. I had everything a woman could want. At that time, there was a Deacon of the church who had the hots for me. He was a good man, not bad-looking. I dated him for a while and then he asked me to marry him. I asked Billy, "Should I?" He told me, "If you love him, then marry him. But if there is any doubt, don't." There was some doubt, for sure, so I told the Deacon, "Let's wait until I'm sure." We did not have sex and by then I was in total heat. In fact, my sex control was out of control. I needed some sex and there was only one person I wanted to have sex with. I was in trouble. Every time I saw Billy, I got sick. I didn't know if he was having sex with anyone. He never showed that side of him. I knew I needed some sex but something kept holding me back. What an awful feeling. It got so bad, I went out to a bar and met a drug dealer. I did not know that at the time that he was a dealer. He was well dressed

and handsome. He must have known I was in heat. It was not a good time. For a few days and nights after I had sex with this guy, I could not face Billy. I could not look him in the eyes. He asked me, "Honey, do you want to tell me something?" I said, "No." He said, "Okay, when you're ready, just talk to me, I'm here for you." I felt unclean because I knew Billy knew that I had had sex. I had to tell him somehow, so I asked him to take me for a ride and I told him what I had done. He asked me, "Do you want to do it again with him?" I told him, "No." He said, "You remember that you are a woman and that can happen. You have done nothing wrong in my eyesight." I cried on his shoulder. That was when I told him I was in love with him. He said, "I know that, but you must be sure because our love will be rocky and you must be able to stand the pressure that you will have to go through. I cannot have a weak woman." So I asked him point-blank, "Will you marry me?" He said "Yes. But you must talk to my Bishop." I asked, "What do I tell him?" Billy said, "Tell him what's on your heart. He will know if you are telling him the truth." Billy made the appointment to see the Bishop. When I entered the office, I felt all alone. It was so clean and not a sound was to be heard. I sat down on the couch in the outer office, waiting for the Sister to call me. Everything flashed back in my mind as I waited to see him. I wanted to leave, but I could not do that to Billy. It must have been hours I waited, but not really. The Sister came through the door, "The Bishop will see you now." I walked in his office weak-kneed, and there sat a gray-haired, handsome man with a winning smile. "Come in, my daughter, have a seat," he smiled, "I have spoken to Billy about you and he is very concerned. That makes me concerned. You are young and blessed to have a man like Billy to be concerned about you. Now I understand you are in

love with Billy. Is this true?" I answered, "Yes I am." "What makes you know this?" he asked, still smiling. My jaws locked. I tried to speak but nothing came out. He asked me again, "What makes you know that you are in love with Billy? Is it his looks? Is it his kindness? Is it his position? What do you see in him that makes you feel you love him?" I looked across the long polished desk at the Bishop and he saw me squirm. I looked at him and said, "Sir, you have asked me things I cannot answer one by one because I feel all of those things, so I don't know how to answer you." I brushed a bead of sweat off my lip, and I knew I was about to cry. " Do you know what love is?" He asked, kindly. "No," I confessed, "I just know the word, and I know that I feel weak every time I see him or hear his voice. And other things happen when he is near me. Please don't ask me what." I began to feel like I couldn't breathe. I felt very hot, suddenly. The Bishop leaned forward, "I must ask you, what are those other things?" I was clearly sweating, my knees started to shake. "I-I-I feel like I would do anything he asked of me," I stuttered, " And I mean anything. I feel safe with him." "Have you ever had sex with Billy?" asked the Deacon, looking away, out the window. "No, he never asked." "Would you have had sex with him if he asked you?" "Yes." "Are you willing to stand by him, knowing he is a very popular and a wanted man by many women?" "Yes." " I'm going to tell you something, Billy loves and wants to marry you. I will not stand in your way. I will not stand in his way. I feel you are the right one for him after just talking to you this once. You can tell Billy to come in when you go out." Billy was waiting in the waiting room. I told him to go in. Billy stayed in the Bishop's office for about an hour, and when he came out, he grabbed me and kissed me. I would not let him go. I just held on to him

tight. That was a kiss I will never forget. My eyes got watery, my arms was shaking, my body was shaking into his. I felt his whole body, all of him pressing into my stomach. "Let's get married right away." "Should I go home first and tell my mother?" "If you want." I decided I would go home and tell my mother. I flew home the next day, happy as a lark. When I got home, I told my mother I was going to marry Billy. She freaked out. "You can't do that!" "Why?" I asked. "You just can't. He's too old. He's too popular. You will never be happy. Please darling, don't do this. It will kill your father, you know how he feels about Billy. This won't work, you will tear your family apart. It will destroy us forever and your father will hate me for letting this happen. Please darling, don't do this, for my sake." She started to cry. "Please, please, don't marry Billy." "Mother," I said, "I love you more than you'll ever know, but I love Billy with all my heart and soul. I pray you will forgive me, but I'm going to marry him regardless." There was no changing of my mind by no one. I was grown and had the right to make up my own decisions and that Billy was going to be my husband, and I was going to sleep in his bed, and I was going to make love to him anytime he asked and no other man would have me as long as Billy walked this Earth. This was my vow to myself. One of my brothers came over and saw my mother crying. "What's wrong?" He asked. "She's going to marry Billy and that's going to be big trouble with her father." He asked, "Why is it going to be a problem? If she wants to marry Billy, so what. She's grown. Billy is one hell of a nice guy. What's wrong with that?" "Her father will not allow it." "Bullshit. That's not his choice. Just because he's insecure about you don't give him no right to run her life. I'll talk to him first and let him know he better not stand in the way and

he better not take it out on you. I'm tired of him dogging you anyway. Bullshit, bullshit. I'll talk to him tonight. You get ready to go back to your man. Don't worry about your mother. I'm ready to go to jail on this one." My uncle was dead serious, he meant what he was saying. He even went as far as to go to the penitentiary to talk to his big brother about the problem. He told him, "Don't say nothing to him. Tell him I want to see him right away, it's very important. Tell him not to leave until I talk to him." When my father was told my uncle wanted to see him, he did not ask what was up. No one told him. I did not tell. That's when he came the next day, my father went to see my oldest uncle. "What's up?" He asked. "We have been buddies for years, you are my best friend. We have always been real with each other. I know you got a problem with Billy marrying your daughter. And I think you are wrong. You can't run her life, she is grown. She's my niece and I love her. If you stand in their way, our friendship is over and I will find you when I get out of here. So let this matter go. Leave them alone. Don't interfere. Stay out of it. Do I have your word on this?" "O.K. I'll be cool. I promise." When my father walked into the house, he did not say a word. He just went to his bedroom. I knocked on his bedroom door. "Daddy, I want to talk to you." He said, "I already know about it. I have nothing to say. It's your life." "Thanks Daddy," I said, and I called Billy and told him I was coming to him as soon as I could get a flight. I left that next morning for California. Billy met me at the airport. "How did it go?" So I told him, "Mother freaked out, Daddy said nothing." That's that, I did my part. Not that nothing was going to stop me. My mind was made up, nothing was going to get in the way of me marrying Billy. That next Sunday, Billy made the announcement. "I would like

for the church to meet the future first lady, and she must be given the respect of that position at all times." The church took me under their wing and treated me like a queen. One of the Deacons told me, Pastor Billy needs a strong beautiful woman like you. He will make you a good husband. He is a real man and you are welcome into our church. The whole church took over the wedding plans. Billy told me to let them handle everything, and what a job they did! The wedding was set for the first Sunday of the following month, right after Holy Communion. The church mothers picked out my wedding gown. It was a beautiful pink with a twenty-five foot long train. It was just out of this world. And Billy was dressed all in green, including his shoes. There were flowers everywhere. The church was packed. They did not play "Here Comes the Bride," Billy and I marched down the aisle together arm in arm to the tune of "There Will Be Peace in the Valley." When we got to the pulpit, there was the Bishop with that million dollar smile. I have never felt that way in my life before and when he asked me, would I love and cherish him till death do us part, I could not speak. I tried but the words would not come out of my mouth. After what seemed like forever, I shouted out "Yes, yes, oh yes!" The whole church went ballistic and when the Bishop pronounced us man and wife, I fainted. When I came to, I was in Billy's office. Billy was rubbing me head. "Hello, my love. Welcome to your new world." The reception was splendid. None of my family was there. I did not care. The church mothers hurried me to change for my honeymoon. All my bags was packed. They rushed me into a white long limo where Billy was waiting. "Where are we going?" I asked Billy. He said, "Bethlehem!" I asked Billy, "Where is that?" He said, "Where Christ was born." "Are we gonna ride by

train?" "No, we're gonna fly for twenty-six hours." "Billy, I can't be up in the air for that long." He said, "It should be longer, you're gonna be close to heaven." Then I forgot my fears during our flight. Billy kept me in his arms. Every now and then I would open my eyes and look at my man and say to myself, "You've got it all, little girl." When we arrived, there were some ministers waiting for us. They welcomed Billy and me. They gave Billy all he had deserved. They took us to a little house. This was our honeymoon home. These people loved Billy. When we entered the house, there was everything, no servants, just me and Billy. There was one window and one door. Everybody hurried up and left. Now it was just me and my husband and I was totally lost. They had lots of food, but I wasn't hungry. It was a warm but beautiful night. The moon was full. Billy asked me to come out and look at the sky. There were three clouds in the sky. I will not forget that night my man came out of the house and asked, "Do you need more time?" I said, "Hell no! Oops! No, darling, my time is yours." I went back into the house. He closed the doors and the windows. He said, "Darling, I'm waiting for your love." I asked him what did he want me to do? He just said, "Do whatever you want to do." I went into the bathroom and undressed. I put on my nightgown. I tried to open the bathroom door and it would not open. I pulled and pulled, then Billy opened the door. I got in bed, Billy pulled me over. Billy had already taken off his attire. I ripped off my clothes and laid down. He came to me with all the manpower that you could ever imagine. I knew then that I had conceived. My legs opened and he put his love in me. I forgot everything. All I thought about was Billy. He did not say nothing. During that stage, all I remember was firecrackers busting all over me. I knew right then that he had impregnated me. I

knew I had his baby the first time. It was awesome. I woke up the next morning, no sickness, no throwing up, just a still feeling my man had given me my first baby. We made love all that two weeks we were there. I was ready for him every day, all he had to do was touch me. I had become a sex freak for him. But as the man he was, he could keep in control. I just wanted more of his love. I would not put on my panties, hoping he would grab me, but he made me put them on, then he told me, "Honey, you don't have to entice me. Just be by my side, the rest comes. You have to prove nothing to me. Don't try to make me have sex, just be ready when it's time. Your love is good and that's good and thank God for you and I love you very much." When we arrived back home, we were welcome and now we must get to work, helping Billy keep his popularity and making him grow. He was a perfect husband. When I found out I was really pregnant, everyone went wild. I could not cook, I could not do anything, it was heavenly. I had my baby without any trouble. It was a beautiful boy. We named him Billy Jr, I loved him so much. He was a sweet baby. He looked just like his daddy. I had started to study the Bible and Billy walked me through the chapters. "I want you to know everything about my teaching so one day you will take my teaching to more people." I learned so much from Billy and we made love every day and every night. Just when my baby boy started to walk, I was pregnant again. This time it was a little girl, a little woman. My children were my life, but I had never taken them to see my grandmother. Little Billy was growing bigger and bigger, he was a giant. And we were so happy. Then, I was pregnant again. This time I had twins. I just could not stop giving him all my love. Every time he touched me, I got pregnant. Now we had five kids and I was really ready for more.

But we decided to slow down. I just could not get enough of Billy. One night, about 3 AM, the phone rang. It was my oldest uncle. He was out of prison and wanted me to bring the kids to see their grandmother. I asked Billy, "Should I?" He said, "Yes, they must know their grandmother and the rest of your family." So I took the kids to see their grandmother and great uncles, and they were overwhelmed. They just loved them to death. My father was not as loving as the rest, but he tried to be civil. Every night I was there, I would hear my mother and father trading bitter words. That made me cut my visit short. I returned to the Coast and vowed I would not take the kids back there anymore. I would fly my mother here if she wanted to see her grandchildren. My love for my husband just grew stronger day by day and I had grown into a full fledged woman. My body was almost perfect and Billy would tell me this every day, and we made love every night except my sick days, and God answered our prayers and stopped the babies from coming. That gave me a chance to concentrate on the five I had. They were good kids and Billy did not spoil them. They walked the line but they were treated very good and got everything they needed. And so did I. Billy was a good father, he took time with them, no picks, everyone was treated the same. They went to public school. Nothing more than any other children in the church. But they were talented. Billy Jr. started playing drums at the age of six. The others were singing in the church choir. One morning, right after the kids had left for school, about 11 AM, the school called me. They told me Billy Jr. had been taken to the hospital. I was shocked. I called Billy at the church and told him. He picked me u and we rushed to the hospital. When we got there, Billy was in ICU. He had suffered a case of hepatitis D and was in a slight coma.

We waited for hours. Then the doctor came out us and told us he needed blood right away and all of the family had to be tested. After we were cleared, the doctor came in and said, this is great, all of you have type A, the same blood, so we can move right ahead. This is good but very rare. Four weeks later, Billy Jr. was out of ICU and 2 weeks after that, he was discharged from the hospital. Things got back to normal. I was studying my Bible. My life was on track. Lo and behold, I got a call from my mother. She was drunk as a skunk. "I can't take this anymore, I want to come out there for a while until this man gets his self together." I asked her, "What are you going to tell Daddy?" "I'm just going to tell him I want to see my daughter and my grandbabies and I going whether he like it or not. She flew in, a nervous wreck. She came to church that Sunday and Billy opened the doors to the church and my mother got up, walked down the isle and found the Lord. I was so proud of her. She stopped drinking and Billy and her renewed their old bond. It was just blessed. Four weeks later, my father called and told her to come home. She talked to Billy. Billy asked her, are you strong enough to go back? She said, "Yes, I got the Lord on my side." So she left and returned to her husband. I knew in my heart that this was not the end of this matter because I knew my father could never turn her loose. But still, I prayed for them. It was not two weeks when we got that phone call, my father had snapped and shot my mother five times and ran. They did not catch him. Me and Billy flew to my mother's side, she was dying. My uncles and the police was looking for my father. When we entered the hospital room, my mother was lying there with tubes in her nose and I just can't name what else. When we walked into the room, she opened her eyes and moved her hands, calling Billy closer. She

whispered something in Billy's ear and he looked up at me and started to cry. Then he looked at me again. Just then, the machine went blank and the sound was steady. My mother was gone. I had never seen the look on Billy's face that day when we left the hospital. Billy kept crying, saying, "I have sinned, I will not see my Lord." I asked him, "What are you saying?" He would not tell me, he just kept saying, "I have sinned before my God." When we got back to the hotel, we parked the car in the garage. Going to the elevator, a man jumped from between the cars. It was my father. He said, "I'm going and you are too," and then he shot Billy five times and disappeared. I was stunned and I fell on Billy, crying and blood running all over me. The garage attendant ran up to us and had seen what had happened. He called the police. The police called the emergency unit. He was still alive. I begged him, "Billy, please don't leave me." They rushed him to the hospital. The first thing he asked was to see his lawyer. Mr. Rubinstein came in and was rushed to Billy's room. Billy made his last will and testament, but he did not disclose nothing to us. He said, "I will make an appointment for you to come to my office. At that time I will read you his will." I did not care about the will, I was just mind dead. My man was gone, it was the storm of life. The church was chaotic. No one knew what to do. The leader was gone. My uncles and the police were bound to catch my father and my uncles had said the police better get him first or there won't be nothing to get. The sun did not shine for four days. It rained all the time. It was sad days, the church had lost its leader and I had lost my husband. The mothers came to my house and told me the church wanted to talk to me that night. I did not know what they wanted, but I knew I had to go. When I got there, they told me the church had taken a vote and I was to

be the new pastor. This was the first time in that group that a woman was ever allowed to be a pastor. I was shocked. "You were chosen to be our leader. You know what he wanted, for us you have been faithful. We trust you. This will be a new day, so you must take the lead. You are our church choice! Ninety-three percent of the church voted for you. You must pick up the torch." "I don't know what I'm to do." "Just trust God, He will lead you. Your husband founded this church and you are the sole heir, and your husband taught you well." "Before I can say anything more, I must talk to the Bishop. Then I will give you my answer. I went to the Bishop. He said, "I know why you're here, and I'm going to make this short. You are the chosen one. You can take Billy's leadership farther. I think you would be the perfect leader and I support you all the way. Take this church and lead them. Trust in God, He will show you the way". I went back and accepted the position, not knowing what was ahead. The first Sunday I held service, I stood at the pulpit and I just let the powers of my husband and the powers of the Lord take control and I brought the walls down. I called on any one in the church who did not want me to be their leader to stand. "And if there be three, only three out of fifteen hundred, I will step down today." Just three. The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. That was good enough for me, I had won and I will prove myself. I was blessed to be the leader if this church. They gave me everything I thought I wanted and I gave them everything I knew. I gave them my life. I wish I could have given them more. This was the silence before the storm. I went to the lawyer's office to hear the will and it was the day I became a real woman. It read, "I leave all my worth to my six children. I looked at the lawyer. Six? There's only five. What is he saying? Is there another child

somewhere?" I said, "I don't care how much it cost, find that other child." Three years passed. No one could find that other child. And no one could find my father.

I had loved my mother, and I had loved my father, and although I hated him for murdering my Billy, as a Christian pastor, I knew that I had to see him and forgive him, or I would be damned to Hell forever. I had loved my grandmother, and my brothers, and my loving Billy and our five beautiful children. What had I done wrong to lose the love of my life? And where was this sixth child, who filled me with doubt? Why did I never know of this child? I knew something was wrong, terribly, terribly wrong. I tried to put things together, starting at the beginning. I was confused. I kept up my work in the church and my congregation grew and prospered, as my sermons were filled with tears and moans and beseeching as my personal troubles became the subject of my sermons. My flock hung on my every word and Sundays were filled with screams and cries of agony, as they felt my pain. My five children were my staff and comfort through these three troubled years. I was haunted by my mother's words about Billy, "He's too old for you. He's too smart for you." I remembered how it was just had to have his hugs, when he first came to the BBQ. When he had hugged me, my mind had gone blank.

Three full years had passed, as I sat in the church study, reading the Bible on Saturday night, preparing for the Sunday sermon. It was November, and a cold wind was howling through the streets. One of the elders was to stop by for some papers he had left behind, and when a knock came on the door, I presumed it to be him. As I opened the heavy wooden door, I let out a small scream, for there on the doorstep was… my father! "Don't be afraid, child," he said, removing his

hat and stumbling into the vestibule.

"No need to call the police. I am not here to harm you."

I had backed up into my office and had fallen into the leather sofa.

"What do you want?" I cried.

"I am not well, child, I have only hours, maybe minutes, to live."

He opened his coat and there I saw the crimson seeping through his shirt. He looked to have been shot in the shoulder.

"You need to know what I have to tell you."

He began a broken thread of thoughts, sending my mind into a tailspin.

"Your mother never told you... never told Billy... until the night she died..."

Sirens were screaming down the street, as he fell sideways onto the floor, gasping for air.

"Told me what, what, WHAT?" I shrieked.

He continued slowly, tears welling in his closing eyes, "You see, dear girl, you are the sixth child . You married... your... father!"

THE END

SONG-POEMS
WRITTEN IN REHAB

My Gal Jazabell

———

I got a gal
That's been through hell
She ain't afraid
Of going to jail

She got high hopes
And knows the ropes
She got sexy eyes,
Curvy hips and pretty thighs

She's a whole lot of woman
And she's my gal
She's known all over town
As Jazabell

She got a weak spot
On her neck
And her loving is as good
As a government check

She work hard for her money
Boy! She's got class
Brand new ride
Paid for in cash

She'll treat you like a king
Love you like a dog
She'll have you sleeping
In a hollow log

That's my gal
Jazabell
Go for what you know
Cause you're good to go

It The Same Game

Just because you come
From another city
Don't think the game's
Gonna give you pity

You might look new
But so do the boys in blue
If you come on strong
And your game smell wrong
Ain't nothing going on

The game is the same
It's the same
Game

You got be true to the game
And the game will be true to you

If you think you're slick
And everybody is a trick
And the game cut you some slack
Just remember my brother
You gonna meet another
Brother that aint gonna go for that

It's the same game
Wherever you go
You might get over today
But gonna reap what you sow
True that
It's the same

I'm Not Worthy

I'm not worthy of your love
I just can't be
What you expect of me
Baby I'm just not worthy

Whenever I need you
You're always there
You give what I need
Your love and tender care
I'm not worthy of you

I don't show you no appreciation
The only thing I've given you
Is pain and aggravation
Even though I've tried to be
what you want me to be

Maybe I'm just a rolling stone
I'm just a man that's got to be free
I'm not worthy of you
But I just can't let you go

If you ask me to cut you loose
Then my answer would be, no
I know I'm not worthy

I don't treat you
Like you treat me
But I just won't set you free
Maybe it's just because
You're the opposite of me

Baby I can depend on you
But you can't depend on me
I'm not worthy of your love
But I just can't set it free

Did You Mean It

Did you mean what you said
Last night in our bed
Did you mean it
Tell me
Did you mean it?

Was it the last time
Last night
That I'll ever hold you
In my arms real tight

Kissing you from head to toe
Loving you more than you'll ever know
Never thinking there would come a day
When your love for me would fade away

And I'll be singing that sad song
Telling me the thrill is gone

Did you mean it
Tell me, baby
Did you mean it?

You said you don't want
To cause me pain and sorrow
That's why you're leaving me tomorrow
Did you mean it?

Even though I think it's wrong
For you to leave me all alone
I guess you've found somebody new
And there's nothing I can do
To change your mind

So I'l face it with a smile
Knowing all the while
Deep in my heart I will all ways
Love you

Montana Slim*

He dress like a duke
He ruled in 'Buque
Slim was a household name
Player of women
Was his claim to fame

He had seven cars
One for each day
Seems like every good
Came Slim's way

Slim's reputation
Was less than sleazy
You could always hear him say
Pimping was easy

He was the only black man
(On Montana)
With a gold Rolls Royce

And come women
Slim had his choice
By chance Slim met
A woman name Anna
A gal on Montana

Anna took one look at Slim
She said
Yes, Hallelujah!
That's him

Slim smoked them boots that night
After that
Slim had Anna up tight
To Slim everything was going right

Together they were clocking plenty cash
Even Ray Charles could see
It wouldn't last

Driving a Britz Eldoro
White on white
He slept all day
And he played all night

Anna introduced Slim to her brother
Who hated men of color
Early one morning
Slim was driving in

Ann's brother committed
The cardinal sin
He hid in the bushes
By the garage door

In his hand was a 44
When he saw Slim
He pulled the trigger
Shouting Hallelujah
I killed the nigger

Slim's story
Was never told
The case gathered dust
And finally closed

No one knew
What happened to him
It was just the end
Of Montana Slim

---

*NOTE: Montana is a street in Chicago

Moody

I use to call her Tooty Frooty
But lately we just don't agree
I guess I'm growing tired of her
Looks like she's tired of me

If I order pizza, she'll order steak
And when we're lying i bed
She's got her back to me
Wide awake

Something's gone terribly wrong
I can see it in her face
That clearly shows me
We both need some space

I used to call her Tooty Frooty
Now I just call her Moody

Moody, I miss you terribly
Come on back to me

I thought when you left,
everything would be okay
But Moody since you've been gone
I miss you more and more each day

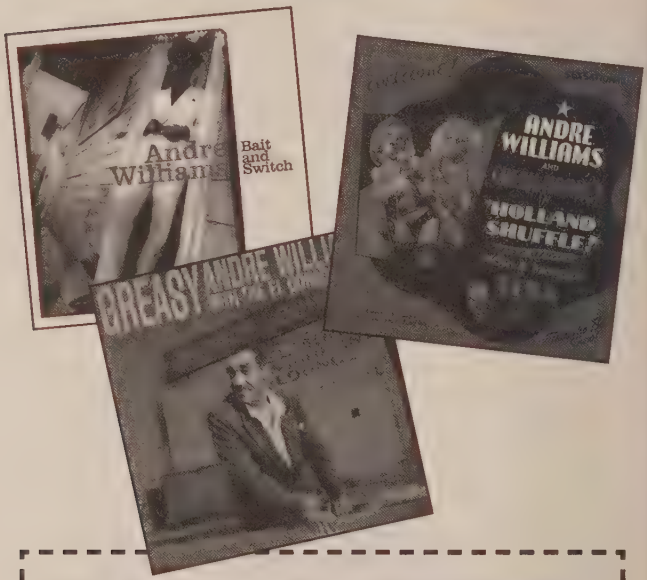
I don't know who was right
I don't know who was wrong
I know we can make it
But then it's taken much too long

Moody, if I have to beg
I'll do what I got to do
'Cause there's one thing that I realize
Moody, I can't live without you

THE END

(Really...)

ANDRE WILLIAMS SOUND BLAST!



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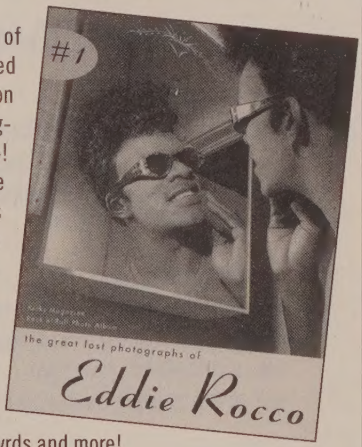

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Heed what I say. Otherwise you got nobody but your own self to blame."

—*Nick Tosches*

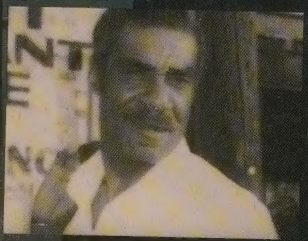

photo: Billy Miller

Andre Williams was born in Bessemer, Alabama in 1936. He spent his teen years in Chicago, relocating to Detroit, Michigan after a stint in the Navy. He went into the entertainment field, recording many top hits including *Bacon Fat*, *Greasy Chicken*, *Jail Bait*, and *Pulling Time* for the legendary Fortune Records label. He earned nickname "Mr. Rhythm" for the hundreds of classic mas that he has written, performed on, or produced. He contin to create music and makes his home back in Chicago. *Swee* his first collection of fiction.

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